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SELECT
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WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL and CRITICAL PREFACES
BY

DR. AIKIN.

in Ten Volumes. VOL. II.



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JOHN MILTON,

Continued.

PARADISE LOST.

Book IX.

The Argument.

Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns, as a mist, by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her found alone: Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields: the serpent finds her alone; his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now; the ser-

pent answers, that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both : Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge forbidden : the serpent now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments, induces her at length to eat ; she, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not ; at last brings him of the fruit ; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof : Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her : and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit : the effects thereof in them both ; they seek to cover their nakedness ; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or angel guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar us'd
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast ; permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblam'd. I now must change
Those notes to tragic ; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt
And disobedience : on the part of Heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
Death's harbinger : sad task, yet argument
Not less but more heroic than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued

Thrice fugitive about Troy wall ; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd ;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son ;
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
And dictates to me slumbering ; or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse :
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late ;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd ; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feign'd ; the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung ; or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, imblazon'd shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament ; then marshall'd feast
Serv'd up in hall with sewers and seneshals ;
The skill of artifice or office mean,
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument
Remains ; sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depress'd ; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.

The Sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veil'd the horizon round :
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improv'd
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd.
By night he fled, and at midnight return'd
From compassing the Earth ; cautious of day,
Since Uriel, regent of the Sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarn'd the cherubim
That kept their watch ; thence full of anguish
driven,

The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness, thrice the equinoctial line
He circled ; four times cross'd the car of night
From pole to pole traversing each colúre ;
On the eighth return'd ; and on the coast averse
From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the
change,

Where Tigris at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
Rose up a fountain by the tree of life :
In with the river sunk, and with it rose
Satan, involv'd in rising mist ; then sought
Where to lie hid ; sea he had search'd, and land,
From Eden over Pontus and the pool

Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob ;
Downward as far antarctic ; and in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barr'd
At Darien ; thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus : thus the orb he roam'd
With narrow search ; and with inspection deep
Consider'd every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles ; and found
The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
Him after long debate, irresolute
Of thoughts revolv'd, his final sentence chose
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight : for, in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding ; which, in other beasts observ'd,
Doubt might beget of diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolv'd, but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd.

“ O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferr'd
More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old !
For what god, after better, worse would build ?
Terrestrial Heaven, danc'd round by other Heavens
That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone as seems,
In thee concentrating all their precious beams
Of sacred influence ! As God in Heaven
Is centre, yet extends to all ; so thou,
Centring, receiv'st from all those orbs : in thee,

Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
Of creatures animate with gradual life
Of growth, sense, reason, all summ'd up in Man.
With what delight could I have walk'd thee round,
If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd,
Rocks, dens, and caves ! But I in none of these
Find place or refuge ; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries : all good to me becomes [state.
Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my
But neither here seek I, no nor in Heaven
To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven's Supreme ;
Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound :
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts ; and, him destroyed,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him link'd in weal or woe ;
In woe then ; that destruction wide may range :
To me shall be the glory sole among
The infernal powers, in one day to have marr'd
What he, Almighty styl'd, six nights and days
Continued making ; and who knows how long
Before had been contriving ? though perhaps
Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
From servitude inglorious well nigh half

The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
Of his adorers : he, to be aveng'd,
And to repair his numbers thus impair'd,
Whether such virtue spent of old now fail'd
More angels to create, if they at least
Are his created, or, to spite us more,
Determin'd to advance into our room
A creature form'd of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils : what he decreed,
He effected ; Man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and Earth his seat,
Him lord pronounc'd ; and, O indignity !
Subjected to his service angel-wings,
And flaming ministers to watch and tend
Their earthy charge : of these the vigilance
I dread : and, to elude, thus wrapt in mist
Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap may find
The serpent sleeping ; in whose many folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent ! that I, who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a beast ; and, mix'd with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the height of deity aspir'd !
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to ? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soar'd ; obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils :
Let it ; I reck not, so it light well aim'd,

Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,
Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker rais'd
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight-search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,
His head the midst, well stor'd with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
Fearless unfear'd he slept: in at his mouth
The Devil enter'd; and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspir'd
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturb'd not, waiting close the approach of morn.
Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breath'd
Their morning incense, when all things, that breathe,
From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair
And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune, how that day they best may ply
Their growing work: for much their work outgrew
The hands' despatch of two gardening so wide,
And Eve first to her husband thus began.

"Adam, well may we labour still to dress

This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd ; but till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint ; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
Or bear what to my mind first thoughts present :
Let us divide our labours ; thou, where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb ; while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon :
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
Casual discourse draw on ; which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearn'd ?"

To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd.
" Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear !
Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd,
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assign'd us ; nor of me shalt pass
Unprais'd : for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,

Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles ; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food ;
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
He made us, and delight to reason join'd. [hands
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint
Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
Assist us : but, if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield :
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee sever'd from me ; for thou know'st
What hath been warn'd us, what malicious foe
Envyng our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault ; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder ;
Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need :
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our feälty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more ;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied.

“ Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth’s
Lord !

That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform’d I learn,
And from the parting angel over-heard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then return’d at shut of evening flowers.
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear’st not, being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear ; which plain infers
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduc’d ; [breast,
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy
Adam, mis-thought of her to thee so dear ?”

To whom with healing words Adam replied.
“ Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve !
For such thou art ; from sin and blame entire :
Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The tempted with dishonour foul ; suppos’d
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation : thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offer’d wrong,

Though ineffectual found : misdeem not then,
If such affront I labour to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare ;
Or daring, first on me the assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn ;
Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
Angels ; nor think superfluous other's aid.
I from the influence of thy looks receive
Access in every virtue ; in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength ; while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or over-reach'd,
Would utmost vigour raise, and rais'd unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"

So spake domestic Adam in his care
And matrimonial love ; but Eve, who thought
Less attributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd.

" If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straiten'd by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met ;
How are we happy, still in fear of harm ?
But harm precedes not sin : only our foe,
Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity : his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns
Foul on himself ; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd
By us ? who rather double honour gain

From his surmise prov'd false; find peace within,
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event.
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd
Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combin'd.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
And Eden were no Eden, thus expos'd."

To whom thus Adam fervently replied.
" O Woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordain'd them : his creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he created, much less Man,
Or aught that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force ; within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power :
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the will ; for what obeys
Reason, is free ; and reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect ;
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surpris'd,
She dictate false ; and mis-inform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins,
That I should mind thee oft : and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve ;
Since reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborn'd,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd.
Seek not temptation then, which to avoid

Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not : trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience ; the other who can know,
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest ?
But, if thou think, trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st,
Go ; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more ;
Go in thy native innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue ; summon all !
For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine."

So spake the patriarch of mankind ; but Eve
Persisted ; yet submit, though last, replied.

" With thy permission then, and thus forewarn'd
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch'd only ; that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepar'd,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek ;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew ; and, like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves ; but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd, and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver arm'd,
But with such gardening tools as art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,
Likest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled
Vertumpus, or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated ; she to him as oft engag'd
To be return'd by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
O much deceiv'd, much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presum'd return ! event perverse !
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose ;
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
Waited with hellish rancour imminent
To intercept thy way, or send thee back
Despoil'd of innocence, of faith, of bliss !
For now, and since first break of dawn, the fiend,
Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come ;
And on his quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purpos'd prey.
In bower and field he sought where any tuft
Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance, or plantation for delight ;
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate ; he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanc'd ; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay

Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd ; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
Nearer he drew, and many a walk travérs'd
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm ;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imborder'd on each bank, the hand of Eve :
Spot more delicious than those gardens feign'd
Or of reviv'd Adonis, or renown'd
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son ;
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
Much he the place admir'd, the person more.
As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight ;
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound ;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more ;
She most, and in her look sums all delight :
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone : her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overaw'd

His malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought :
That space the evil-one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good ; of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure, not for him ordain'd : then soon
Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites.

“ Thoughts, whither have ye led me ! with what
sweet

Compulsion thus transported, to forget
What hither brought us ! hate, not love ; nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure ; but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying ; other joy
To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass
Occasion which now smiles ; behold alone
The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould ;
Foe not formidable ! exempt from wound,
I not ; so much hath Hell debas'd, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods !
Not terrible, though terrour be in love
And beauty, not approach'd by stronger hate,

Hate stronger, under show of love well feign'd ;
The way which to her ruin now I tend."

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclos'd
In serpent, inmate bad ! and toward Eve
Address'd his way : not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since ; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd
Fold above fold, a surging maze ! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes ;
With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant : pleasing was his shape
And lovely ; never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in *Illyria* chang'd
Hermione and *Cadmus*, or the god
In *Epidaurus* ; nor to which transform'd
Ammonian Jove, or *Capitoline* was seen ;
He with *Olympias* ; this with her who bore
Scipio, the height of *Rome*. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd
To interrupt, side long he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail :
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye ; she, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as us'd
To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast ; more duteous at her call,
Than at *Circean* call the herd disguis'd.
He, bolder now, uncall'd before her stood,

But as in gaze admiring : oft he bow'd
His turret crest, and sleek enamell'd neck,
Fawning ; and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turn'd at length
The eye of Eve, to mark his play ; he, glad
Of her attention gain'd, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began.

“ Wonder not, sovran mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst who art sole wonder ! much less arm
Thy looks, the Heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate ; I thus single ; nor have fear'd
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld ! there best beheld,
Where universally admir'd ; but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except, [seen
Who sees thee ? (and what is one ?) who should be
A goddess among gods, ador'd and serv'd
By angels numberless, thy daily train.”

So glaz'd the tempter, and his proem tun'd :
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling ; at length,
Not unamaz'd, she thus in answer spake. [nounc'd

“ What may this mean ? language of man pro-
By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd ?
The first, at least, of these I thought denied

To beasts ; whom God, on their creation-day,
Created mute to all articulate sound :
The latter I demur ; for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued ;
Redouble then this miracle, and say
How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight ?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due."

To whom the guileful tempter thus replied.
" Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve !
Easy to me it is to tell thee all [be obey'd :
What thou command'st ; and right thou shouldst
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food ; nor aught but food discern'd
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high :
Till, on a day roving the field, I chanc'd
A goodly tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd,
Ruddy and gold : I nearer drew to gaze ;
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleas'd my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat, dropping with milk at even,
Unsucc'd of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolv'd
Not to defer ; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent

Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon ;
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach or Adam's : round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
I spar'd not ; for, such pleasure till that hour,
At feed or fountain, never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers ; and speech
Wanted not long ; though to this shape retain'd.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Consider'd all things visible in Heaven,
Or Earth, or Middle ; all things fair and good :
But all that fair and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
United I beheld ; no fair to thine
Equivalent or second ! which compell'd
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declar'd
Sovran of creatures, universal dame !"

So talk'd the spirited sly snake ; and Eve.
Yet more amaz'd, unwary thus replied.

" Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first prov'd :
But say, where grows the tree ? from hence how far ?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown

To us ; in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouch'd,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her birth."

To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad.
" Empress, the way is ready, and not long ;
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing myrrh and balm : if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon." [roll'd

" Lead then," said Eve. He, leading, swiftly
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest ; as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amaz'd night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool ;
There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far :
So glister'd the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe ;
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake.

" Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming
hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee ;
Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.

But of this tree we may not taste nor touch ;
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice ; the rest, we live
Law to ourselves ; our reason is our law."

To whom the tempter guilefully replied.
" Indeed ! hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declar'd of all in Earth or Air ?"

To whom thus Eve, yet sinless. " Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat ;
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, ' Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' "

She scarce had said, though brief, when now
more bold

The tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on ; and, as to passion mov'd,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely and in act
Rais'd, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renown'd,
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence [dress'd,
Flourish'd, since mute ! to some great cause ad-
Stood in himself collected ; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue ;
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right :
So standing, moving, or to height up grown,
The tempter, all impassion'd, thus began.

" O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science ! now I feel thy power
Within me clear ; not only to discern

Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deem'd however wise.
Queen of this universe ! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death : ye shall not die :
How should you ? by the fruit ? it gives you life
To knowledge ; by the threatener ? look on me,
Me, who have touch'd and tasted ; yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than Fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
Is open ? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass ? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounc'd, whatever thing death be,
Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil ;
Of good, how just ? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd ?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just ;
Not just, not God : not fear'd then, nor obey'd :
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid ? Why, but to awe ;
Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers ? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye shall be as gods, since I as Man,
Internal Man, is but proportion meet ;
I, of brute, human ; ye, of human, gods.
So ye shall die, perhaps, by putting off

Human, to put on gods ; death to be wish'd,
Though threaten'd, which no worse than this can
bring,

And what are gods, that man may not become
As they, participating god-like food ?
The gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds :
I question it ; for this fair Earth I see,
Warm'd by the Sun, producing every kind ;
Them, nothing : if they all things, who enclos'd
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave ? and wherein lies
The offence, that man should thus attain to know ?
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
Impart against his will, if all be his ?
Or is it envy ? and can envy dwell [more
In heavenly breasts ? — These, these, and many
Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste."

He ended ; and his words, replete with guile
Into her heart too easy entrance won :
Fix'd on the fruit she gaz'd, which to behold
Might tempt alone ; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth :
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and wak'd
An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell
So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye ; yet first
Pausing a while, thus to herself she mus'd.

“ Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admir’d ;
Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught [praise :
The tongue not made for speech, to speak thy
Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree
Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil ;
Forbids us then to taste ! but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want :
For good unknown sure is not had ; or, had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise ?
Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom ? In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die !
How dies the serpent ? he hath eat’n and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational, till then. For us alone
Was death invented ? or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserv’d ?
For beasts it seems : yet that one beast which first
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
The good befall’n him, author unsuspect,
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then ? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,
Of God or death, of law or penalty ?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,

Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise : what hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat !
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent ; and well might ; for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else
Regarded ; such delight till then, as seem'd,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge ; nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she engorg'd without restraint,
And knew not eating death : satiate at length,
And heighten'd as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began.

" O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise ! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created ; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offer'd free to all ;
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know ;
Though others envy what they cannot give.
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide : not following thee, I had remain'd

In ignorance ; thou open'st wisdom's way,
And giv'st access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret : Heaven is high,
High, and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on Earth ; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear ? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without copartner ? so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal ; and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior : for, inferior, who is free ?
This may be well : but what if God have seen,
And death ensue ? then I shall be no more !
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct ;
A death to think ! Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe :
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life."

So saying, from the tree her step she turn'd ;
But first low reverence done, as to the Power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infus'd
Into the plant sciential sap, deriv'd
From nectar, drink of gods, Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn

Her tresses, and her rural labours crown ;
As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
Great joy he promis'd to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delay'd :
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
Misgave him ; he the faltering measure felt ;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn when first they parted : by the tree
Of knowledge he must pass ; there he her met,
Scarce from the tree returning ; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smil'd,
New gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffus'd.
To him she hasted ; in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology too prompt ;
Which, with bland words at will, she thus address'd.

“ Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay ?
Thee I have miss'd, and thought it long, depriv'd
Thy presence ; agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice ; for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear :
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Opening the way, but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste ;
And hath been tasted such : the serpent wise,
Or not restrain'd as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit ; and is become,
Not dead, as we are threaten'd, but thenceforth
Endued with human voice and human sense,
Reasoning to admiration ; and with me

Persuasively hath so prevail'd, that I
Have also tasted, and have also found
The effects to correspond ; opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead ; which for thee
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss ;
Tedious, unshar'd with thee, and odious soon.
Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
May join us, equal joy, as equal love ;
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
Deity for thee when Fate will not permit. ”

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told ;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glow'd.
On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amaz'd,
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd ;
From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed :
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke,

“ O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works, creature in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet !
How art thou lost ! how on a sudden lost,
Defac'd, deflower'd, and now to death devote !
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance, how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidden ! Some cursed fraud

Of enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruin'd; for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die :
How can I live without thee ! how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn !
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart : no, no ! I feel
The link of Nature draw me : flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturb'd
Submitting to what seem'd remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turn'd.

" Bold deed thou hast presum'd, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provok'd, who thus hast dar'd,
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo ?
Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate ; yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
Profan'd first by the serpent, by him first
Made common, and unhallow'd, ere our taste :
Nor yet on him found deadly ; he yet lives ;
Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
Higher degree of life : inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent ; which cannot be

But to be gods, or angels, demi-gods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works ; which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependant made ; so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose ;
Not well conceiv'd of God, who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
Us to abolish, lest the adversary
Triumph, and say ; ‘ Fickle their state whom God
Most favours ; who can please him long ? Me first
He ruin'd, now Mankind ; whom will he next ?’
Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe.
However I with thee have fix'd my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom : if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life ;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of Nature draw me to my own ;
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine ;
Our state cannot be sever'd ; we are one,
One flesh ; to lose thee were to lose myself.”

So Adam ; and thus Eve to him replied.

“ O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high !
Engaging me to emulate ; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam ? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both ; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolv'd,

Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, link'd in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit ;
Whose virtue, (for of good still good proceeds ;
Direct, or by occasion,) hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known.
Were it I thought death menac'd would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace ; chiefly, assur'd
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful, love unequall'd : but I feel
Far otherwise the event ; not death, but life
Augmented, open'd eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touch'd my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds."

So saying, she embrac'd him, and for joy
Tenderly wept ; much won, that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompense (for such compliance bad
Such recompense best merits) from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand : he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge ; not deceiv'd,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again

In pangs ; and Nature gave a second groan ;
Sky lour'd ; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original : while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill : nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass fear'd, the more to sooth
Him with her lov'd society ; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the Earth : but that false fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming : he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes ; she him
As wantonly repaid ; in lust they burn :
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move.

“ Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience no small part ;
Since to each meaning savour we apply,
And palate call judicious ; I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting ; if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidd'n, it might be wish'd,
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come, so well refresh'd, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare ;
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever : bounty of this virtuous tree !”

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent ; well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seiz'd ; and to a shady bank,
Thick over-head with verdant roof imbower'd,
He led her nothing loth ; flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinths ; Earth's freshest softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin : till dewy sleep
Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhal'd ; and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumber'd, now had left them ; up they rose
As from unrest ; and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how open'd, and their minds
How darken'd : innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone ;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty shame ; he cover'd, but his robe
Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Dalilah, and wak'd
Shorn of his strength, they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue : silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute :
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,
At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd.

“ O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man’s voice ; true in our fall,
False in our promis’d rising ; since our eyes
Open’d we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil ; good lost, and evil got ;
Bad fruit of knowledge ; if this be to know ;
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soil’d and stain’d.
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence ; whence evil store ;
Even shame, the last of evils ; of the first
Be sure then. — How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld ? Those heavenly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
Insufferably bright. O ! might I here
In solitude live savage ; in some glade
Obscur’d, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening : cover me, ye pines !
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more ! —
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen ;
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sew’d,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts ; that this new comer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”

So counsell'd he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood ; there soon they chose
The fig-tree ; not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between :
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade : those
leaves

They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe ;
And, with what skill they had, together sew'd,
To gird their waist ; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame ! O, how unlike
To that first naked glory ! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feather'd cincture ; naked else, and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores. [part
Thus fenc'd, and, as they thought, their shame in
Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep ; nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord ; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tost and turbulent :
For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will
Heard not her lore ; both in subjection now
To Sensual Appetite, who from beneath

Usurping over sovran Reason claim'd
Superior sway : from thus distemper'd breast,
Adam, estrang'd in look and alter'd style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renew'd. [staid

“ Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possess'd thee ; we had then
Remain'd still happy ; not, as now, despoil'd
Of all our good ; sham'd, naked, miserable !
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe ; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail.”

To whom, soon mov'd with touch of blame, thus
Eve.

“ What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam severe !
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happen'd thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps ? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake ;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side ?
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidst ?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay ;
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me.”

To whom, then first incens'd, Adam replied.
" Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve ! Express'd
Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I ;
Who might have liv'd, and joy'd immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee ?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing ? Not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint : what could I more ?
I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait ; beyond this had been force ;
And force upon free-will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on ; secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial ; and perhaps
I also err'd, in overmuch admiring
What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee ; but I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him, who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lets her will rule : restraint she will not brook ;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse."

Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appear'd no end.

Book X.

The Argument.

Man's transgression known; the guardian-angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors, who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity clothes them both, and re-ascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the Sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of Man: to make the way easier from Hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium, in full assembly relates with boasting his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust

and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death ; God foretels the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things ; but for the present, commands his angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve ; she persists, and at length appeases him : then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not ; but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent ; and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and spiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise ; and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in Heaven ; for what can 'scape the eye
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient ? who, in all things wise and just,
Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire, and free-will, arm'd ;
Complete to have discover'd and repuls'd
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still re-
member'd,
The high injunction, not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted ; which they not obeying
Incurr'd (what could they less ?) the penalty ;

And, manifold in sin, deserv'd to fall.
Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste
The angelic guards ascend, mute, and sad,
For Man ; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle fiend had stol'n
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeas'd
All were who heard ; dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet, mix'd
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell : they towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear
With righteous plea their utmost vigilance,
And easily approv'd ; when the Most High
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice.

“ Assembled angels, and ye powers return'd
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd,
Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this tempter cross'd the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand ; Man should be seduc'd,
And flatter'd out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker ; no decree of mine
Concurring to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
His free-will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fall'n he is ; and now

What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, — death denounc'd that day ?
Which he presumes already vain and void,
Because not yet inflicted, as he fear'd,
By some immediate stroke ; but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
Justice shall not return as bounty scorn'd.
But whom send I to judge them ? whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son ? To thee I have transferr'd
All judgment, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee
Man's friend, his Mediator, his design'd
Both ransom and Redcemer voluntary,
And destin'd Man himself to judge Man fall'n."

So spake the Father ; and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blaz'd forth unclouded deity : he full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild.

" Father Eternal, thine is to decree ;
Mine, both in Heaven and Earth, to do thy will
Supreme ; that thou in me, thy Son belov'd,
May'st ever rest well pleas'd. I go to judge
On Earth these thy transgressors ; but thou know'st,
Whoever judg'd, the worst on me must light,
When time shall be ; for so I undertook
Before thee ; and, not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me deriv'd ; yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.

Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgment, but the judg'd,
Those two; the third best absent is condemn'd,
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law :
Conviction to the serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory. Him thrones, and powers,
Princedom, and dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to Heaven-gate; from whence
Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight; the speed of gods
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes
wing'd.

Now was the Sun in western cadence low
From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the Earth now wak'd, and usher in
The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,
Came the mild judge, and intercessor both,
To sentence Man: the voice of God they heard
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds [heard,
Brought to their ears, while day declin'd; they
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God,
Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud.

"Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
Not pleas'd, thus entertain'd with solitude,
Where obvious duty ere while appear'd unsought :
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? — Come
forth!"

[first

He came; and with him Eve, more loth, though

To offend ; discountenanc'd both, and discompos'd ;
Love was not in their looks, either to God,
Or to each other ; but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answer'd brief.

“ I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself.” To whom
The gracious Judge without revile replied. [fear'd,

“ My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not
But still rejoic'd ; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee ? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee ? Hast thou eaten of the tree,
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat ?”

To whom thus Adam sore beset replied.
“ O Heaven ! in evil strait this day I stand
Before my judge ; either to undergo
Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life ;
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame
By my complaint : but strict necessity
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint ;
Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
However insupportable, be all
Devolv'd ; though should I hold my peace, yet thou
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal. —
This woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
And what she did, whatever in itself,

Her doing seem'd to justify the deed ;
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied.
" Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice ? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
Hers in all real dignity ? Adorn'd
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection ; and her gifts
Were such, as under government well seem'd ;
Unseemly to bear rule ; which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."

So having said, he thus to Eve in few.

" Say, woman, what is this which thou hast done?"

To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelm'd,
Confessing soon, yet not before her judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abash'd replied.

" The serpent me beguil'd, and I did eat."

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment he proceeded on the accus'd
Serpent, though brute ; unable to transfer
The guilt on him, who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation ; justly then accurs'd,
As vitiated in nature : more to know
Concern'd not Man, (since he no further knew,)
Nor alter'd his offence ; yet God at last
To Satan first in sin his doom applied,
Though in mysterious terms, judg'd as then best :
And on the serpent thus his curse let fall.

“ Because thou hast done this, thou art accurs’d
Above all cattle, each beast of the field ;
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
And dust shall eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will cause
Enmity, and between thine and her seed ;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.”

So spake this oracle, then verified
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heaven,
Prince of the air ; then, rising from his grave
Spoil’d principalities and powers, triumph’d
In open show ; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurp’d ;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet ;
Ev’n he, who now foretold his fatal bruise :
And to the woman thus his sentence turn’d.

“ Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception ; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth ; and to thy husband’s will
Thine shall submit ; he over thee shall rule.”

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounc’d.
“ Because thou hast hearken’d to the voice of thy
wife,

And eaten of the tree, concerning which
I charg’d thee, saying, ‘ Thou shalt not eat thereof ;’
Curs’d is the ground for thy sake ; thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof, all the days of thy life ;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ;
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,

Till thou return unto the ground ; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken, know thy birth,
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."

So judg'd he Man, both judge and saviour sent ;
And the instant stroke of death, denounc'd that day,
Remov'd far off ; then, pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume ;
As when he wash'd his servants' feet ; so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid ;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies :
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, cover'd from his Father's sight.
To him with swift ascent he up return'd,
Into his blissful bosom reassum'd
In glory, as of old ; to him appeas'd,
All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with Man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet. [Earth,

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinn'd and judg'd on
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the fiend pass'd through,
Sin opening ; who thus now to Death began.

" O son, why sit we here each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives
In other worlds, and happier seat provides

For us, his offspring dear ? It cannot be
But that success attends him ; if mishap,
Ere this he had return'd, with fury driven
By his avengers ; since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given me large,
Beyond this deep : whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite,
With secret amity, things of like kind,
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
Inseparable, must with me along :
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
Impassable, impervious ; let us try
Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this main from Hell to that new world,
Where Satan now prevails ; a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct."

Whom thus the meagre shadow answer'd soon.
" Go whither Fate, and inclination strong,
Leads thee ; I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading ; such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things there that live :

Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."

So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell
Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field,
Where armies lie encamp'd, come flying, lur'd
With scent of living carcasses design'd
For death, the following day, in bloody fight :
So scented the grim feature, and upturn'd
His nostril wide into the murky air ;
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark, [great]
Flew diverse ; and with power (their power was
Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tost up and down, together crouded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell :
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagin'd way
Beyond Petsõra eastward, to the rich
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident smote, and fix'd as firm
As Delos, floating once ; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move ;
And with Asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gather'd beach
They fasten'd, and the mole immense wrought on
Over the foaming deep high-arch'd, a bridge

Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death ; from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
So, if great things to small may be compar'd,
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea ; and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
And scourg'd with many a stroke the indignant
waves.

Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical, a ridge of pendant rock,
Over the vex'd abyss, following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
Of this round world : with pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
And durable ! And now in little space
The confines met of empyrean Heaven,
And of this world ; and, on the left hand, Hell
With long reach interpos'd ; three several ways
In sight, to each of these three places led.
And now their way to Earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending ; when, behold !
Satan, in likeness of an angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose :
Disguis'd he came ; but those his children dear
Their parent soon discern'd, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduc'd, unminded slunk

Into the wood fast by ; and, changing shape,
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband ; saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures ; but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled ; not hoping to escape, but shun
The present ; fearing, guilty, what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict ; that past, return'd
By night, and listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint,
Thence gather'd his own doom ; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now return'd ;
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhop'd
Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendous bridge his joy increas'd.
Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke.

“ O parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies ! which thou view'st as not thine own ;
Thou art their author, and prime architect :
For I no sooner in my heart divin'd,
My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet,
That thou on Earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt
That I must after thee, with this thy son ;
Such fatal consequence unites us three ;

Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track :
Thou hast achiev'd our liberty, confin'd
Within Hell-gates till now ; thou us impower'd
To fortify thus far, and overlay,
With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.
'Thine now is all this world ; thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not ; thy wisdom gain'd
With odds what war hath lost, and fully aveng'd
Our foil in Heaven ; here thou shalt monarch reign,
There didst not ; there let him still victor sway,
As battle hath adjudg'd ; from this new world
Retiring, by his own doom alienated ;
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature, from thy orbicular world ;
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne."

Whom thus the prince of darkness answer'd glad.
" Fair daughter, and thou son and grand-child both ;
High proof ye now have given to be the race
Of Satan, (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King,)
Amplly have merited of me, of all
The infernal empire, that so near Heaven's door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
Mine, with this glorious work ; and made one realm,
Hell and this world, one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice ;

You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend ;
There dwell, and reign in bliss ; thence on the Earth
Dominion exercise and in the air,
Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declar'd ;
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My substitutes I send ye, and create
Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
Issuing from me : on your joint vigour now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death expos'd by my exploit.
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear ; go, and be strong !”

So saying he dismiss'd them ; they with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane ; the blasted stars look'd wan,
And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse
Then suffer'd. The other way Satan went down
The causeway to Hell-gate : on either side
Disparted Chaos over built exclaim'd,
And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd,
That scorn'd his indignation : through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd,
And all about found desolate ; for those,
Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
Flown to the upper world ; the rest were all
Far to the inland retir'd, about the walls
Of Pandemonium ; city and proud seat
Of Lucifer, so by allusion call'd
Of that bright star to Satan paragon'd ;
There kept their watch the legions, while the grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance

Might intercept their emperor sent ; so he
Departing gave command, and they observ'd.
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
Retires ; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen : so these, the late
Heaven-banish'd host, left desert utmost Hell
Many a dark league, reduc'd in careful watch
Round their metropolis ; and now expecting
Each hour their great adventurer, from the search
Of foreign worlds ; he through the midst unmark'd
In show plebeian angel militant
Of lowest order, pass'd ; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne ; which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was plac'd in regal lustre. Down a while
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen :
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appear'd, or brighter ; clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter : all amaz'd
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspéct, and whom they wish'd beheld,
Their mighty chief return'd : loud was the acclaim :
Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers,
Rais'd from their dark divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approach'd him ; who with hand
Silence, and with these words, attention won.

“ Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues,
powers :

For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now ; return'd
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accurs'd, the house of woe,
And dungeon of our tyrant : now possess,
As lords, a spacious world, to our native Heaven
Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great achiev'd. Long were to tell
What I have done ; what suffer'd ; with what pain
Voyag'd th' unreal, vast, unbounded deep
Of horrible confusion ; over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is pav'd,
To expedite your glorious march ; but I
Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forc'd to ride
The untractable abyss, plung'd in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild ;
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely oppos'd
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme ; thence how I found
The new created world, which fame in Heaven
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
Of absolute perfection ! therein Man
Plac'd in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happy : him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator ; and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple ; he, thereat
Offended, worth your laughter ! hath given up
Both his beloved Man and all his world,
To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm ;
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man

To rule, as over all he should have rul'd.
True is, me also he hath judg'd, or rather
Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape
Man I deceiv'd : that which to me belongs
Is enmity, which he will put between
Me and mankind ; I am to bruise his heel ;
His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head :
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain ? — Ye have the account

Of my performance : what remains, ye gods,
But up, and enter now into full bliss ?”

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
Their universal shout and high applause,
To fill his ear ; when, contrary, he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn ; he wonder'd, but not long
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more ;
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare ;
His arms clung to his ribs ; his legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain ; a greater power
Now rul'd him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd,
According to his doom : he would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue ; for now were all transform'd
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
To his bold riot : dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now
With complicated monsters head and tail,

Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbæna dire,
Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and elops drear,
And dipsas ; (not so thick swarm'd once the soil
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiūsa,) but still greatest he the midst,
Now dragon grown, larger than whom the Sun
Engender'd in the Pythian vale or slime,
Huge Python, and his power no less he seem'd
Above the rest still to retain ; they all
Him follow'd, issuing forth to the open field,
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
Heaven-fall'n, in station stood or just array ;
Sublime with expectation when to see
In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief ;
They saw, but other sight instead ! a croud
Of ugly serpents ; horror on them fell,
And horrid sympathy ; for, what they saw, [arms,
They felt themselves, now changing ; down their
Down fell both spear and shield ; down they as fast ;
And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form
Catch'd, by contagion ; like in punishment, [meant,
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they
Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame [stood
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
His will who reigns above, to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Us'd by the tempter : on that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now ris'n, to work them further woe or shame ;

Yet, parch'd with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain ;
But on they roll'd in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curl'd Megæra : greedily they pluck'd
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flam'd :
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceiv'd : they, fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chew'd bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected : oft they assay'd,
Hunger and thirst constraining ; drugg'd as oft,
With hatefullest disrelish writh'd their jaws,
With soot and cinders fill'd ; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as Man [plagu'd
Whom they triumph'd once laps'd. Thus were they
And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resum'd ;
Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo,
This annual humbling certain number'd days,
To dash their pride, and joy, for Man seduc'd.
However, some tradition they dispers'd
Among the Heathen, of their purchase got,
And fabled how the serpent, whom they call'd
Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide
Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus ; thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arriv'd ; Sin, there in power before,
Once actual ; now in body, and to dwell

Habitual habitant ; behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse : to whom Sin thus began.

“ Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death !
What think'st thou of our empire now, though earn'd
With travel difficult, not better far [watch,
Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat
Unnam'd, undreaded, and thyself half-starv'd ?”

Whom thus the Sin-born monster answer'd soon.
“ To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven ;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet ;
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast un-hide-bound corps.”

To whom the incestuous mother thus replied.
“ Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and
flowers,
Feed first ; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl ;
No homely morsels ! and whatever thing
The sithe of Time mows down, devour unspar'd ;
Till I, in Man residing, through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect ;
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.”

This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later ; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendent seat the saints among,
To those bright orders uttered thus his voice.

“ See, with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
So fair and good created ; and had still

Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
Folly to me ; so doth the prince of Hell
And his adherents, that with so much ease
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so heavenly : and, conniving, seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
'That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule ;
And know not that I call'd, and drew them thither,
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure ; till cramm'd and gorg'd, nigh
burst

With suck'd and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well pleasing Son,
Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave, at last,
Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of Hell
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws. [pure
Then Heaven and Earth renew'd shall be made
To sanctity, that shall receive no stain :
Till then, the curse pronounc'd on both precedes."

He ended, and the heavenly audience loud
Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung : " Just are thy ways,
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works ;
Who can extenuate thee ? Next, to the Son,
Destin'd Restorer of mankind, by whom
New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,
Or down from Heaven descend." — Such was their
song ;

While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty angels, gave them several charge,
As sorted best with present things. The Sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter ; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon
Her office they prescribed ; to the other five
Their planetary motions, and aspécts,
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign ; and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the Sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous ; to the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore ; the thunder when to roll
With terroure through the dark aëreal hall.
Some say he bid his angels turn ascense
The poles of Earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the Sun's axle ; they with labour push'd
Oblique the centric globe : some say, the Sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropic Crab : thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn ; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime ; else had the spring
Perpetual smil'd on Earth with vernant flow'rs,
Equal in days and nights, except to those

Beyond the polar circles ; to them day
Had unbenighted shone, while the low Sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west ; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit
The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turn'd
His course intended ; else, how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat ? [duc'd
These changes in the Heavens, though slow ; pro-
Like change on sea and land ; sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent : now, from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, arm'd with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas, and Cæcias, and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn ;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer black with thunderous clouds
From Serrallona ; thwart of these, as fierce,
Forth rush the Lévant and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libeccio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things ; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduc'd, through fierce antipathy :
Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish : to graze the herb all leaving,
Devour'd each other ; nor stood much in awe

Of Man, but fled him : or, with countenance grim,
Glar'd on him passing. These were from without
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within ;
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint.

“ O miserable of happy ! Is this the end
Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory, who now become
Accurs'd, of blessed ? hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my height
Of happiness ! — Yet well, if here would end
The misery ; I deserv'd it, and would bear
My own deservings ; but this will not serve :
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
Delightfully, *Increase and multiply ;*
Now death to hear ! for what can I increase,
Or multiply, but curses on my head ?
Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head ? Ill fare our ancestor impure,
For this we may thank Adam ! but his thanks
Shall be the execration : so, besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound ;
On me, as on their natural centre, light
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes !
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me Man ? Did I solicit thee

From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust ;
Desirous to resign and render back
All I receiv'd ; unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems; yet, to say truth, too late
I thus contest ; then should have been refus'd
Those terms, whatever, when they were propos'd :
Thou didst accept them : wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and, though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient ; and, reprov'd, retort,
' Wherefore didst thou beget me ? I sought it not :'
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity, begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him ; thy reward was of his grace ;
Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit ; his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return :
O welcome hour whenever ! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive ?
Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth

Insensible! How glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of Man
Which God inspir'd, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod: then, in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinn'd; what dies but what had life
And sin? The body properly hath neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
For though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?
Can he make deathless death? That were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himself
Impossible is held; as argument
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
In punish'd Man, to satisfy his rigour,
Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law:
By which all causes else, according still
To the reception of their matter, act;
Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say

That death be not one stroke, as I suppos'd,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward ; which I feel begun
Both in me, and without me ; and so last
To perpetuity : — Ay me ! that fear
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head ; both Death and I
Are found eternal, and incorporate both ;
Nor I on my part single ; in me all
Posterity stands curs'd : fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons ! O, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none !
So disinherited, how would you bless
Me, now your curse ! Ah, why should all mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless ? But from me what can proceed,
But all corrupt ; both mind and will deprav'd
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me ? How can they then acquitted stand
In sight of God ? Him, after all disputes,
Forc'd I absolve : all my evasions vain,
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction : first and last
On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due ;
So might the wrath ! fond wish ! couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the Earth to bear ;
Than all the world much heavier, though divided
With that bad woman ? Thus, what thou desir'st,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future ;

To Satan only like both crime and doom.

O Conscience! into what abyss of fears

And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!"

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud,
Through the still night; not now, as ere Man fell,
Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air
Accompanied; with damps, and dreadful gloom;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terrour: on the ground
Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground; and oft
Curs'd his creation; Death as oft accus'd
Of tardy execution, since denounc'd
The day of his offence. "Why comes not Death,
Said he, "with one thrice-acceptable stroke
To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
Justice Divine not hasten to be just?
But Death comes not at call; Justice Divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song."—
Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assay'd:
But her with stern regard he thus repell'd.

"Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best
Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false
And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended

To hellish falsehood, snare them ! But for thee
I had persisted happy ; had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdain'd
Not to be trusted ; longing to be seen,
Though by the Devil himself ; him overweening
To over-reach ; but, with the serpent meeting,
Fool'd and beguil'd ; by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side ; imagin'd wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults ;
And understood not all was but a show
Rather than solid virtue ; all but a rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister, from me drawn ;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found. O ! why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
Of Nature, and not fill the world at once
With men, as angels, without feminine ;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind ? This mischief had not then befall'n,
And more that shall befall ; innumerable
Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
And straight conjunction with this sex : for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse ; or, if she love, withheld
By parents ; or his happiest choice too late

Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame :
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound."

He added not, and from her turn'd ; but Eve,
Not so repuls'd, with tears that ceas'd not flowing
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble ; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint.

" Forsake me not thus, Adam ! witness Heaven
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd ! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees ; bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay : forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist ?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace ; both joining,
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assign'd us,
That cruel serpent : on me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befall'n ;
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable ! Both have sinn'd ; but thou
Against God only ; I against God and thee ;
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my crimes impórtune Heaven ; that all
The sentence, from thy head remov'd, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe ;
Me, me only, just object of his ire !"

She ended weeping ; and her lowly plight,
Immoveable, till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledg'd and deplor'd, in Adam wrought
Commiseration : soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress ;
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeas'd, his aid :
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon.

“ Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
So now of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself ; alas !
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited ;
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me expos'd.
But rise ; — let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere ; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burthen, in our share of woe ;
Since this day's death denounc'd, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow pac'd, evil ;
A long day's dying to augment our pain
And to our seed (O hapless seed !) deriv'd.”

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied.
“ Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,

Found so erroneous; thence by just event
Found so unfortunate: nevertheless,
Restor'd by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart
Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd
By Death at last; and miserable it is,
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woeful race,
That after wretched life must be at last
Food for so foul a monster; in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death
Shall be deceiv'd his glut, and with us two
Be forc'd to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet;
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire; which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread:
Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short, —

Let us seek Death ;—or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves :
Why stand we longer shivering under fears,
That show no end but death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy ?” —

She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest : so much of death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dy'd her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing sway'd,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had rais'd ; and thus to Eve replied.

“ Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent, than what thy mind contemns ;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee ; and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overlov'd.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounc'd ; doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire, than so
To be forestall'd ; much more I fear lest death,
So snatch'd, will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay ; rather, such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live : then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
The serpent's head ; piteous amends ! unless

Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
Satan ; who, in the serpent, hath contriv'd
Against us this deceit : to crush his head
Would be revenge indeed ! which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolv'd, as thou proposest ; so our foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mention'd then of violence
Against ourselves ; and wilful barrenness,
That cuts us off from hope ; and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard, and judg'd,
Without wrath or reviling ; we expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day ; when lo ! to thee
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth ; soon recompens'd with joy,
Fruit of thy womb : on me the curse aslope
Glanc'd on the ground ; with labour I must earn
My bread ; what harm ? Idleness had been worse ;
My labour will sustain me ; and, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided ; and his hands
Cloth'd us unworthy, pitying while he judg'd ;
How much more if we pray him, will his ear
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
And teach us further by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow ?
Which now the sky, with various face, begins
To show us in this mountain ; while the winds

Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair spreading trees ; which bids us seek
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumm'd, ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gather'd beams
Reflected may with matter sere foment ;
Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
The air attrite to fire ; as late the clouds
Justling, or push'd with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine the slant lightning ; whose thwart flame,
driven down,
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine ;
And sends a comfortable heat from far
Which might supply the Sun : such fire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
He will instruct us praying, and of grace
Beseeching him ; so as we need not fear
To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd
By him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do, than, to the place
Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent ; and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg ; with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek ?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure ; in whose looks serene,
When angry most he seem'd and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy, shone ?"

So spake our father penitent ; nor Eve
Felt less remorse : they, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judg'd them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent ; and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd ; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

Book XI.

The Argument.

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them : God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise ; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them ; but first to reveal to Adam future things : Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs ; he discerns Michael's approach ; goes out to meet him : the angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits ; the angel leads him up to a high hill ; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying ; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had remov'd
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Régenerate grow instead ; that sighs now breath'd

Unutterable ; which the spirit of prayer
Inspir'd, and wing'd for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory : yet their port
Not of mean suitors ; nor important less
Seem'd their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drown'd, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate : in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heavenly doors ; then clad
With incense, where the golden altar fum'd,
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne : them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began. [sprung

“ See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are
From thy implanted grace in Man ; these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mix'd
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring ;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produc'd ere fall'n
From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear
To supplication ; hear his sighs, though mute ;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him ; me, his advocate
And propitiation ; all his works on me,
Good, or not good, ingraft ; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me ; and, in me, from these receive

The smell of peace toward mankind : let him live
Before thee reconcil'd, at least his days
Number'd though sad ; till death, his doom, (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse,)
To better life shall yield him : where with me
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss ;
Made one with me, as I with thee am one."

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene.
" All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
Obtain ; all thy request was my decree :
But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The law I gave to Nature him forbids :
Those pure immortal elements, that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now ; and purge him off,
As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,
And mortal food ; as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him endow'd ; with happiness,
And immortality : that fondly lost,
This other serv'd but to eternize woe ;
Till I provided death : so death becomes
His final remedy ; and, after life,
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refin'd
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Wak'd in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renew'd.
But let us call to synod all the blest, [not hide
Through Heaven's wide bounds : from them I will
My judgments ; how with mankind I proceed,

As how with peccant angels late they saw,
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd."

He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watch'd ; he blew
His trumpet, heard in Qre since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Fill'd all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amarantine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high :
And took their seats : till from his throne supreme
The Almighty thus pronounc'd his sovran will.

" O sons, like one of us Man is become
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended fruit ; but let him boast
His knowledge of good lost, and evil got ;
Happier ! had it suffic'd him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
My motions in him ; longer than they move,
His heart I know, how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the garden forth to till
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.

" Michael, this my behest have thou in charge :
Take to thee from among the cherubim

Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend,
Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise ;
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair ;
From hallow'd ground the unholy ; and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
At the sad sentence rigorously urg'd,
(For I behold them soften'd, and with tears
Bewailing their excess,) all terror hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate ; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten ; intermix
My covenant in the woman's seed renew'd :
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace :
And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch ; and of a sword the flame
Wide-waving ; all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the tree of life :
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To spirits foul, and all my trees their prey ;
With whose stol'n fruit man once more to delude."

He ceas'd ; and the arch-angelic power prepar'd
For swift descent ; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful cherubim : four faces each
Had, like a double Janus ; all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
Charm'd with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed

Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
To re-salute the world with sacred light,
Leucothœa wak'd; and with fresh dews embalm'd
The Earth; when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above; new hope to spring
Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet link'd;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd.

“ Eve, easily may faith admit, that all
The good which we enjoy, from Heaven descends;
But, that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
So prevalent as to concern the mind
Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Even to the seat of God. For since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease;
Kneel'd, and before him humbled all my heart;
Methought I saw him placable and mild,
Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favour; peace return'd
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;
Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
Eve rightly call'd, mother of all mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live; and all things live for Man.”

To whom thus Eve with sad demeanour meek.
“ Ill-worthy I such title should belong
To me transgressor; who, for thee ordain'd

A help, became thy snare ; to me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise :
But infinite in pardon was my judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am grac'd
The source of life ; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf'st,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat impos'd,
Though after sleepless night ; for see ! the Morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling : let us forth ;
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd
Laborious till day droop ; while here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks ?
Here let us live, though in fall'n state, content."

So spake, so wish'd much-humbled Eve ; but Fate
Subscrib'd not ; Nature first gave signs, impress'd
On bird, beast, air ; air suddenly eclips'd,
After short blush of morn : nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stoop'd from his aery tour,
Two birds of gayest plume before him drove ;
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
First hunter then, pursu'd a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind ;
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
Adam observ'd, and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmov'd, to Eve thus spake.

" O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven, by these mute signs in Nature,
shows
Forerunners of his purpose ; or to warn

Us, haply too secure, of our discharge
From penalty, because from death releas'd
Some days ; how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows ? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more ?
Why else this double object in our sight
Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground,
One way the self-same hour ? why in the east
Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heavenly
fraught ?"

He err'd not ; for by this the heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt ;
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilion'd with his guardians bright ;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appear'd
In Dothan, cover'd with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaim'd. The princely hierarch
In their bright stand there left his powers, to seize
Possession of the garden ; he alone,
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way,
Not unperceiv'd of Adam : who to Eve,
While the great visitant approach'd, thus spake.

" Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps

Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observ'd ; for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the heavenly host ; and, by his gait,
None of the meanest ; some great potentate
Or of the thrones above ; such majesty
Invests him coming ! yet not terrible,
That I should fear ; nor sociably mild,
As Raphaël, that I should much confide ;
But solemn and sublime ; whom not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire."

He ended ; and the arch-angel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man ; over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flow'd,
Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce ; Iris had dipt the woof ;
His starry helm unbuckled show'd him prime
In manhood where youth ended ; by his side,
As in a glistening zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread ; and in his hand the spear.
Adam bow'd low ; he, kingly, from his state
Inclin'd not, but his coming thus declar'd.

" Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs :
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard ; and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days
Given thee of grace ; wherein thou may'st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st cover : well may then thy Lord, appears'd,
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim ;

But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not : to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil."

He added not ; for Adam at the news
Heart-struck with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound ; Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover'd soon the place of her retire.

" O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death !
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise ? thus leave
Thee, native soil ! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods ? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names !
Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount ?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower ! by me adorn'd
With what to sight or smell was sweet ! from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild ? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustom'd to immortal fruits ?"

Whom thus the angel interrupted mild.
" Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine :
Thy going is not lonely ; with thee goes

Thy husband ; him to follow thou art bound ;
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scatter'd spirits return'd,
To Michael thus his humble words address'd.

" Celestial, whether among the thrones, or nam'd
Of them the highest ; for such of shape may seem
Prince above princes ! gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us ; what besides
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes ! all places else
Inhospitable appear, and desolate ;
Nor knowing us, nor known : and, if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary him with my assiduous cries :
But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth :
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me, that, departing hence,
As from his face I shall be hid, depriv'd
His blessed countenance : here I could frequent
With worship place by place where he vouchsaf'd
Presence Divine ; and to my sons relate,
' On this mount he appear'd ; under this tree
Stood visible ; among these pines his voice
I heard ; here with him at this fountain talk'd :

So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory
Or monument to ages ; and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers :
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or foot-step trace ?
For though I fled him angry, yet, recall'd
To life prolong'd and promis'd race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory ; and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael with regard benign.
" Adam, thou know'st Heaven his, and all the
Earth ;

Not this rock only ; his Omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power and warm'd :
All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift ; surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confin'd
Of Paradise, or Eden : this had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations ; and had hither come
From all the ends of the Earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons :
Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain,
God is, as here ; and will be found alike
Present ; and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face

Express, and of his steps the track divine.
Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirm'd
Ere thou from hence depart ; know, I am sent
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee, and to thy offspring : good with bad
Expect to hear ; supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men ; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow ; equally inur'd
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse : so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepar'd endure
Thy mortal passage when it comes. — Ascend
This hill ; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here sleep below ; while thou to foresight wak'st ;
As once thou slept'st, while she to life was
form'd."

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied.
" Ascend, I follow thee, safe guide, the path
Thou lead'st me ; and to the hand of Heaven submit,
However chastening ; to the evil turn
My obvious breast ; arming to overcome
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
If so I may attain." — So both ascend
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest ; from whose top
The hemisphere of Earth, in clearest ken,
Stretch'd out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness ;
To show him all Earth's kingdoms, and their glory.

His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destin'd walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin of Sinæan kings ; and thence
To Agra and Lehor of great Mogul,
Down to the golden Chersonese ; or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan ; or where the Russian ksar
In Mosco ; or the sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born ; nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less marítim kings
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola farthest south ;
Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen ;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world : in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa ; and yet unspoil'd
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film remov'd,
Which that false fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred ; then purg'd with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see ;
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.

So deep the power of these ingredients pierc'd,
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforc'd to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranc'd ;
But him the gentle angel by the hand
Soon rais'd, and his attention thus recall'd.

“ Adam, now ope thine eyes ; and first behold
The effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee ; who never touch'd
The excepted tree ; nor with the snake conspir'd ;
Nor sinn'd thy sin ; yet from that sin derive
Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds.”

His eyes he open'd, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New reap'd ; the other part sheep-walks and folds ;
I' the midst an altar as the land-mark stood
Rustic, of grassy sord ; thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Uncull'd, as came to hand ; a shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best ; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strow'd,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites perform'd :
His offering soon propitious fire from Heaven
Consum'd with nimble glance, and grateful steam ;
The other's not, for his was not sincere ;
Whereat he inly rag'd, and, as they talk'd,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life ! he fell ; and, deadly pale,
Groan'd out his soul with gushing blood effus'd.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismay'd, and thus in haste to the angel cried.

“ O teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n
To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd ;
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid ? ”

To whom Michael thus, he also mov'd, replied.
“ These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins ; the unjust the just hath alain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From Heaven acceptance ; but the bloody fact
Will be aveng'd ; and the other's faith, approv'd,
Lose no reward ; though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore. ” To which our sire.

“ Alas ! both for the deed, and for the cause !
But have I now seen Death ? Is this the way
I must return to native dust ? O sight
Of terroure, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel ! ”

To whom thus Michael. “ Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on Man ; but many shapes
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal ; yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance, than within.
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die ;
By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear ; that thou may'st know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men. ” Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark ;
A lazar-house it seem'd ; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd : all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms

Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheuma.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans ; Despair
Tended the sick busiest from couch to couch ;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoc'd
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-ey'd behold ? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born ; compassion quell'd
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess ;
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renew'd.

“ O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd !
Better end here unborn. Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us ? rather, why
Obtruded on us thus ? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down ;
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
The image of God in Man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debas'd
Under inhuman pains ? Why should not Man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt ? ”

" Their Maker's image," answer'd Michael,
" then

Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungovern'd Appetite ; and took
His image whom they serv'd, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own ;
Or if his likeness, by themselves defac'd ;
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness ; worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves."

" I yield it just," said Adam, " and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust ?"

" There is," said Michael, " if thou well observe
The rule of *Not too much* ; by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st ; seeking from
thence

Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return :
So may'st thou live ; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap ; or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd ; for death mature :
This is Old Age ; but then, thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty ; which will
change

To wither'd, weak, and gray ; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast ; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful in thy blood will reign

A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life." To whom our ancestor.

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge;
Which I must keep till my appointed day
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution." Michael replied. [liv'st,

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou
Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heaven:
And now prepare thee for another sight."

He look'd, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue; by some, were herds
Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and, who mov'd
Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch,
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
In other part stood one who, at the forge
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted, (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,
Down to the veins of Earth; thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth; or whether wash'd by stream
From underground;) the liquid ore he drain'd
Into fit moulds prepar'd; from which he form'd
First his own tools; then, what might else be
wrought

Fusil or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort

From the high neighbouring hills, which was their
seat,

Down to the plain descended ; by their guise
Just men they seem'd, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works
Not hid ; nor those things last, which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men : they on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold !
A bevy of fair women, richly gay

In gems and wanton dress ; to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on : [eyes
The men, though grave, ey'd them ; and let their
Rove without rein ; till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they lik'd ; and each his liking chose ;
And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,
Love's harbinger, appear'd ; then, all in heat
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invok'd :
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attach'd the heart
Of Adam, soon inclin'd to admit delight,
The bent of nature ; which he thus express'd.

“ True opener of mine eyes, prime angel blest ;
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past ;
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse ;
Here Nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends.”

To whom thus Michael. “ Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet ;
Created, as thou art, to nobler end

Holy and pure, conformity divine.

Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother ; studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventers rare ;
Unmindful of their Maker, though his spirit [none.
Taught them ; but they his gifts acknowledg'd
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget ;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise ;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists ; and now swim in joy,
Ere long to swim at large ; and laugh, for which
The world ere long a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft.

" O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint !
But still I see the tenour of man's woe
Holds on the same, from woman to begin."

" From man's effeminate slackness it begins,"
Said the angel, " who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts receiv'd.
But now prepare thee for another scene."

He look'd, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between ;
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone, and bold emprise ;
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle rang'd
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood ;
One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow ground ; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty ; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray ;
With cruel tournament the squadrons join ;
Where cattle pastur'd late, now scatter'd lies
With carcasses and arms the ensanguin'd field,
Deserted : others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamp'd ; by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting ; others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire ;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.
In other part the scepter'd heralds call
To council, in the city-gates ; anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mix'd,
Assemble, and harangues are heard ; but soon,
In factious opposition ; till at last,
Of middle age one rising, eminent
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above : him old and young
Exploded, and had seiz'd with violent hands ;

Had not a cloud descending snatch'd him thence
Unseen amid the throng : so violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turn'd full sad : " O ! what are these,
Death's ministers, not men ? who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew
His brother : for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren ; men of men ?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost ?"

To whom thus Michael. " These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st ; [selves
Where good with bad were match'd, who of them-
Abhor to join ; and, by imprudence mix'd,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these giants, men of high renown ;
For in those days might only shall be admir'd,
And valour and heroic virtue call'd ;
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory ; and for glory done
Of triumph, to be styl'd great conquerors,
Patrons of mankind, gods and sons of gods ;
Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth ;
And what most merits fame, in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst
The only righteous in a world perverse,

And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just,
And utter odious truth, that God would come
To judge them with his saints : him the Most High
Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death ; to show thee what reward
Awaits the good : the rest what punishment ;
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."

He look'd, and saw the face of things quite
chang'd ;

The brazen throat of war had ceas'd to roar ;
All now was turn'd to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance ;
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allur'd them ; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declar'd
And testified against their ways ; he oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals ; and to them preach'd
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgments imminent :
But all in vain : which when he saw, he ceas'd
Contending, and remov'd his tents far off :
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk ;
Measur'd by cubit, length, and breadth, and height ;
Smear'd round with pitch ; and in the side a door
Contriv'd ; and of provisions laid in large,

For man and beast : when lo, a wonder strange !
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs ; and enter'd in as taught
Their order : last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives ; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south-wind rose, and, with black
wings

Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under Heaven ; the hills to their supply
Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,
Sent up amain ; and now the thicken'd sky
Like a dark ceiling stood ; down rush'd the rain
Impetuous ; and continued, till the Earth .
No more was seen : the floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves ; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelm'd, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water roll'd ; sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shore ; and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign'd, sea-monsters whelp'd
And stabled ; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left, in one small bottom swum imbark'd.
How didst thou grieve, then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation ! Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy sons ; till, gently rear'd
By the angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last ;
Though comfortless ; as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroy'd at once ;
And scarce to the angel utter'dst thus thy plaint.

“ O visions ill foreseen ! better had I

Liv'd ignorant of future ! so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear ; those now, that were dispens'd
The burden of many ages, on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall
Him or his children ; evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent ;
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel,
Grievous to bear : but that care now is past,
Man is not whom to warn : those few escap'd
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desert : I had hope
When violence was ceas'd, and war on Earth,
All would have then gone well ; peace would have
crown'd

With length of happy days the race of Man ;
But I was far deceived ; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus ? unfold, celestial guide,
And whether here the race of Man will end."

To whom thus Michael. " Those, whom last
thou saw'st

In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void ;
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste
Subduing nations, and achiev'd thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey ;

Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust ; till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquer'd also, and enslav'd by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose
And fear of God ; from 'whom their piety feign'd
In sharp contest of battle found no aid
Against invaders ; therefore, cool'd in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy ; for the Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried :
So all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd ;
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot ;
One man except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurements, custom, and a world
Offended : fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish ; and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
And full of peace ; denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence ; and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observ'd
The one just man alive ; by his command
Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheldst,
To save himself, and household, from amidst
A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodg'd,
And shelter'd round ; but all the cataracts
Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour

Rain, day and night ; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds ; till inundation rise
Above the highest hills : then shall this mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be mov'd
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,
With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening gulf,
And there take root an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang
To teach thee that God attributes to place
No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
And now, what further shall ensue, behold."

He look'd, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated ; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north-wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decay'd ;
And the clear Sun on his wide watery glass
Gaz'd hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst ; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep ; who now had stop'd
His sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fix'd.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear ;
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
And after him, the surer messenger,
A dove sent forth once and again to spy

Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light :
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign :
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train :
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoic'd ; and thus his joy broke forth.

“ O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, heavenly instructor ! I revive
At this last sight ; assur'd that Man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget. [Heaven
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in
Distended, as the brow of God appeas'd ?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve, and shower the Earth ?”

To whom the arch-angel. “ Dextrously thou
aim'st ;
So willingly doth God remit his ire,
Though late repenting him of Man deprav'd ;
Griev'd at his heart, when looking down he saw
The whole Earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh

Corrupting each their way ; yet, those remov'd,
Such grace shall one just man find in his sight,
That he relents, not to blot out mankind ;
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The Earth again by flood ; nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds ; nor rain to drown the world,
With man therein or beast ; but, when he brings
Over the Earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-colour'd bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind his covenant : day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course ; till fire purge all things new,
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall
 dwell."

Book XII.

The Argument.

The angel Michael continues, from the flood, to relate what shall succeed ; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain, who that seed of the woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall ; his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension ; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael ; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either

hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who in his journey bates at noon, [paus'd
Though bent on speed ; so here the arch-angel
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose ;
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes.

“ Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end ;
And Man, as from a second stock, proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see ; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail : objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense :
Henceforth what is to come I will relate ;
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.

“ This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgment past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace ;
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil ; and, from the herd or flock,
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings pour'd, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblam'd ; and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule : till one shall rise
Of proud ambitious heart ; who, not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserv'd
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess

Concord and law of nature from the Earth ;
Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game)
With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous :
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styl'd
Before the Lord ; as in despite of Heaven,
Or from Heaven, claiming second sovrantry ;
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannize,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell :
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven ;
And get themselves a name ; lest, far dispers'd
In foreign lands, their memory be lost ;
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
Obstruct Heaven-towers ; and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase
Quite out their native language ; and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown :
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud,
Among the builders ; each to other calls
Not understood ; till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mock'd they storm : great laughter was in
Heaven,

And looking down, to see the hubbub strange,
And hear the din : thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* nam'd."

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeas'd.

" O execrable son ! so to aspire
Above his brethren ; to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given :
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute ; that right we hold
By his donation ; but man over men
He made not lord ; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man ; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance : wretched man ! what food
Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army ; where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread ?"

To whom thus Michael. " Justly thou abhorr'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty ; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being :
Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires,
And upstart passions, catch the government
From reason ; and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign

Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords ;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom : tyranny must be ;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd,
Deprives them of their outward liberty ;
Their inward lost : witness the irreverent son
Of him who built the ark ; who, for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse ; till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes ; resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways ;
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invoc'd,
A nation from one faithful man to spring :
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship : O, that men
(Canst thou believe ?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch liv'd, who 'scap'd the flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods ! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
To call by vision, from his father's house,
His kindred, and false gods, into a land
-Which he will show him ; and from him will raise

A mighty nation ; and upon him shower
His benediction so, that in his seed
All nations shall be blest : he straight obeys ;
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes :
I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford
To Haran ; after him a cumbrous train
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude ;
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains ; I see his tents
Pitch'd about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
Of Moreh ; there by promise he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the desert south ;
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnam'd :)
From Hermon east to the great western sea ;
Mount Hermon, yonder sea ; each place behold
In prospect, as I point them ; on the shore
Mount Carmel ; here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward ; but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
This ponder, that all nations of the Earth
Shall in his seed be blessed : by that seed
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The serpent's head ; whereof to thee anon
Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This patriarch blest,
Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,
A son, and of his son a grand-child, leaves ;
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown :
The grand-child, with twelve sons increas'd, departs

From Canaan, to a land hereafter call'd
Egypt, divided by the river Nile ;
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea : to sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son
In time of dearth ; a son, whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh : there he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation ; and, now grown,
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests [slaves
Too numerous ; whence of guests he makes them
Inhospitably, and kills their infant males :
Till by two brethren, (these two brethren call
Moses and Aaron,) sent from God to claim
His people from enthralment, they return
With glory, and spoil, back to their promis'd land.
But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compell'd by signs and judgments dire ;
To blood unshed the rivers must be turn'd ;
Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill
With loath'd intrusion, and fill all the land ;
His cattle must of rot and murren die ;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
And all his people ; thunder mix'd with hail,
Hail mix'd with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
And wheel on the Earth, devouring where it rolls ;
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green ;
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,

Palpable darkness, and blot out three days ;
Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon tam'd at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart ; but still, as ice
More harden'd after thaw ; till, in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the sea
Swallows him with his host ; but them lets pass,
As on dry land, between two crystal walls ;
Aw'd by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided, till his rescued gain their shore :
Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,
Though present in his angel ; who shall go
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire ;
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire ;
To guide them in their journey, and remove
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues :
All night he will pursue ; but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch ;
Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,
God looking forth will trouble all his host,
And craze their chariot-wheels : when by command
Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the sea ; the sea his rod obeys ;
On their embattled ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war : the race elect
Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild desert, not the readiest way ;
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarm'd,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather

Inglorious life with servitude ; for life
To noble and ignoble is more sweet
Untrain'd in arms, where rashness leads not on.
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness ; there they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordain'd :
God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound,
Ordain them laws ; part, such as appertain
To civil justice ; part, religious rites
Of sacrifice ; informing them, by types
And shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful : they beseech
That Moses might report to them his will,
And terroure cease ; he grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access,
Without mediator, whose high office now
Moses in figure bears ; to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
And all the prophets in their age the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rights
Establish'd, such delight hath God in men
Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
Among them to set up his tabernacle ;
The Holy One with mortal men to dwell :
By his prescript a sanctuary is fram'd
Of cedar, overlaid with gold ; therein
An ark, and in the ark his testimony,

The records of his covenant ; over these
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
Of two bright cherubim ; before him burn
Seven lamps as in a zodiac representing
The heavenly fires ; over the tent a cloud
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night ;
Save when they journey, and at length they come,
Conducted by his angel, to the land
Promis'd to Abraham and his seed : — the rest
Were long to tell ; how many battles fought ;
How many kings destroy'd ; and kingdoms won ;
Or how the Sun shall in mid Heaven stand still
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
Man's voice commanding, ' Sun, in Gibeon stand,
And thou, Moon, in the vale of Aialon,
Till Israel overcome ! ' so call the third
From Abraham, son of Isaac ; and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interpos'd. " O sent from Heaven,
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast reveal'd ; those chiefly, which concern
Just Abraham and his seed : now first I find
Mine eyes true-opening, and my heart much eas'd ;
Erewhile perplex'd with thoughts, what would be-
come

Of me and all mankind : but now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest ;
Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not, why to those
Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
So many and so various laws are given ;

So many laws argue so many sins
Among them ; how can God with such reside ?

To whom thus Michael. “ Doubt not but that
Will reign among them, as of thee begot ;
And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity, by stirring up
Sin against law to fight : that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man ;
Just for unjust ; that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed, they may find
Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience ; which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease : nor man the moral part
Perform ; and, not performing, cannot live.
So law appears imperfect ; and but given
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better covenant ; disciplin'd
From shadowy types to truth ; from flesh to spirit ;
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace ; from servile fear
To filial : works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
Highly belov'd, being but the minister
Of law, his people into Canaan lead ;
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call,
His name and office bearing, who shall quell
The adversary-serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long-wander'd man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.

Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan plac'd,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies;
From whom as oft he saves them penitent
Fly judges first, then under kings; of whom
The second, both for piety renown'd
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his regal throne
For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
All prophecy, that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A son, the woman's seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings
The last; for of his reign shall be no end.
But first, a long succession must ensue;
And his next son, for wealth and wisdom fam'd,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him, as shall be register'd
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll;
Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
Heap'd to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw'st
Left in confusion; Babylon thence call'd.
There in captivity he lets them dwell
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn

To David, stablish'd as the days of Heaven.
Return'd from Babylon by leave of kings
Their lords, whom God dispos'd, the house of God
They first re-edify ; and for a while
In mean estate live moderate ; till grown
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow :
But first among the priests dissention springs,
Men who attend the altar, and should most
Endeavour peace : their strife pollution brings
Upon the temple itself : at last they seize
The sceptre, and regard not David's sons ;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed king Messiah might be born
Barr'd of his right ; yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in Heaven, proclaims him come ;
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold :
His place of birth a solemn angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night ;
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
Of squadron'd angels hear his carol sung.
A virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High : he shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the
Heavens."

He ceas'd, discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharg'd, as had like grief been dew'd in tears,
Without the vent of words ; which these he breath'd.

" O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope ! now clear I understand [vain ;
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in

Why our great Expectation should be call'd
The seed of woman : virgin mother, hail,
High in the love of Heaven ; yet from my loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High ; so God with man unites.
Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain : say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's
heel." [fight,

To whom thus Michael. " Dream not of their
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel : not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy ; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
Disabled, not to give thee thy death's wound :
Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee, and in thy seed : nor can this be
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, impos'd
On penalty of death, and suffering death ;
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow :
So only can high Justice rest appaid.
The law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the law ; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life, and cursed death ;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption ; and that his obedience,

Imputed, becomes theirs by faith ; his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal, works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphem'd,
Seiz'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemn'd
A shameful and accurs'd, nail'd to the cross
By his own nation ; slain for bringing life :
But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
The law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction : so he dies,
But soon revives ; Death over him no power
Shall long usurp : ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,
His death for man, as many as offer'd life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works : this God-like act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou should'st have
died,
In sin for ever lost from life ; this act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms ;
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems ; a death, like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on Earth, than certain times to appear
To his disciples, men who in his life
Still follow'd him ; to them shall leave in charge

To teach all nations what of him they learn'd
And his salvation ; them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,
For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach ; for, from that day,
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
Salvation shall be preach'd, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world ;
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
With victory triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine ; there shall surprise
The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave ;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
Above all names in Heaven ; and thence shall come,
When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead ;
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in Heaven or Earth ; for then the Earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

So spake the arch-angel Michaël ; then paus'd,
As at the world's great period ; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied.

" O Goodness infinite ! Goodness immense !
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good ; more wonderful

Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness ! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done, and occasion'd ; or rejoice [spring ;
Much more, that much more good thereof shall
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
Must re-ascend, what will betide the few
His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth ? Who then shall guide
His people, who defend ? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt ?"

" Be sure they will," said the angel ; " but from
Heaven

He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them ; and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth : and also arm
With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts ;
What man can do against them, not afraid,
Though to the death ; against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompens'd,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors ; for the Spirit,
Pour'd first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the nations, then on all
Baptiz'd, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win

Great numbers of each nation to receive [length
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at
Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power; though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promis'd alike, and given
To all believers; and, from that pretence,
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; laws which none shall find
Left them inroll'd, or what the spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind
His consort Liberty? what, but unbuild
His living temples, built by faith to stand,
Their own faith, not another's? for, on Earth,
Who against faith and conscience can be heard
Infallible? yet many will presume:
Whence heavy persecution shall arise
On all, who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth; the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms

Religion satisfied ; Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of faith
Rarely be found : so shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign ;
Under her own weight groaning ; till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promis'd to thy aid,
The woman's Seed ; obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord ;
Last, in the clouds, from Heaven to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world ; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New Heavens, new Earth, ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love ;
To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss."

He ended ; and thus Adam last replied.
" How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
Measur'd this transient world, the race of time,
Till time stand fix'd ! Beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart ;
Greatly in peace of thought ; and have my fill
Of knowledge what this vessel can contain ;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God ; to walk
As in his presence ; ever to observe
His providence ; and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small

Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And, to the faithful, death, the gate of life;
Taught this by his example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

To whom thus also the angel last replied.
" This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in Heaven, air, earth, or sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one empire; only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far. —
Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of speculation; for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and see! the guards,
By me encamp'd on yonder hill, expect
Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round:
We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd
Portending good, and all her spirits compos'd
To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;

Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know,
The great deliverance by her seed to come
(For by the woman's seed) on all mankind :
That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
With cause for evils past ; yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the hill ;
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before : but found her wak'd ;
And thus with words not sad she him receiv'd.

" Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I
know ;

For God is also in sleep ; and dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep : but now lead on ;
In me is no delay ; with thee to go,
Is to stay here ; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling ; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banish'd hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence ; though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsaf'd,
By me the promis'd Seed shall all restore."

So spake our mother Eve ; and Adam heard
Well pleas'd, but answer'd not : for now, too nigh
The arch-angel stood ; and from the other hill
To their fix'd station, all in bright array
The cherubim descended ; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening-mist

Ris'n from a river o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanc'd,
The brandish'd sword of God before them blaz'd,
Fierce as a comet ; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime ; whereat
In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain ; then disappear'd.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming brand ; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms :
Some natural tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide :
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

PARADISE REGAINED.

Book I.

The Argument.

The subject proposed. Invocation of the Holy Spirit. — The poem opens with John baptizing at the river Jordan. Jesus coming there is baptized; and is attested, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and by a voice from Heaven, to be the Son of God. Satan, who is present, upon this immediately flies up into the regions of the air: where, summoning his infernal council, he acquaints them with his apprehensions that Jesus is that seed of the Woman, destined to destroy all their power, and points out to them the immediate necessity of bringing the matter to proof, and of attempting, by snares and fraud, to counteract and defeat the person, from whom they have so much to dread. This office he offers himself to undertake; and, his offer being accepted, sets out on his enterprise. — In the meantime God, in the assembly of holy angels, declares that he has given up his Son to be tempted by Satan; but foretels that the tempter shall be completely defeated by him: — upon which the angels sing a hymn of triumph. Jesus is led up by the Spirit into the

wilderness, while he is meditating on the commencement of his great office of Saviour of mankind. Pursuing his meditations he narrates, in a soliloquy, what divine and philanthropic impulses he had felt from his early youth, and how his mother Mary, on perceiving these dispositions in him, had acquainted him with the circumstances of his birth, and informed him that he was no less a person than the Son of God; to which he adds what his own inquiries and reflections had supplied in confirmation of this great truth, and particularly dwells on the recent attestation of it at the river Jordan. Our Lord passes forty days, fasting, in the wilderness, where the wild beasts become mild and harmless in his presence. Satan now appears under the form of an old peasant; and enters into discourse with our Lord, wondering what could have brought him alone into so dangerous a place, and at the same time professing to recognize him for the person lately acknowledged by John, at the river Jordan, to be the Son of God. Jesus briefly replies. Satan rejoins with a description of the difficulty of supporting life in the wilderness; and entreats Jesus, if he be really the Son of God, to manifest his divine power, by changing some of the stones into bread. Jesus reproves him, and at the same time tells him that he knows who he is. Satan instantly avows himself, and offers an artful apology for himself and his conduct. Our blessed Lord severely reprimands him, and refutes every part of his justification. Satan, with much semblance

of humility, still endeavours to justify himself; and, professing his admiration of Jesus and his regard for virtue, requests to be permitted at a future time to hear more of his conversation; but is answered, that this must be as he shall find permission from above. Satan then disappears, and the book closes with a short description of night coming on in the desert.

I, who ere while the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God. inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear through height or depth of Nature's
bounds,

With prosperous wing full summ'd, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age;
Worthy to have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptis'd: to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came

From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan ; came, as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown ; but him the Baptist soon
Descried; divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heavenly office ; nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd : on him baptiz'd
Heaven open'd and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heaven pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was given, a while survey'd
With wonder ; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory ; and then amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake.

“ O ancient powers of air, and this wide world,
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation,) well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd,
In manner at our will, the affairs of Earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceiv'd by me ; though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve

Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven
Delay, for longest time to him is short ;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threaten'd wound,
(At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infrin'g'd, our freedom and our being
In this fair empire won of Earth and air,)
For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born.
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause :
But his growth now to youth's full flower displaying
All virtue, grace, and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them, so
Purified, to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their king : all come,
And he himself among them was baptiz'd ;
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt ; I saw
The prophet do him reverence ; on him, rising
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors : thence on his head
A perfect dove descend, (whate'er it meant,)
And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,
' This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.'
His mother then is mortal, but his Sire

He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven :
And what will he not do to advance his Son ?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep :
Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
(Not force, but well-couch'd fraud, well-woven
 snares,)

Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam ; and the exploit perform'd
Successfully : a calmer voyage now
Will waft me ; and the way, found prosperous once,
Induces best to hope of like success."

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted, and surpris'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings ; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief ;
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,

Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This Man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try ;
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
To end his reign on Earth, so long enjoy'd :
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd council, pre-ordain'd and fix'd,
Of the Most High ; who, in full frequency bright
Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

“ Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all angels conversant on Earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message, late
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God ;
Then told'st her, doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'ershadow her. This man, born and now up-
grown,

To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan ; let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostacy : he might have learnt
Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame

Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man,
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell ;
Winning, by conquest, what the first man lost,
By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness ;
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two gr^{and} foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance :
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh,
That all the angels and ethereal powers,
They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men."

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

" Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles !
The Father knows the Son ; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And, devilish machinations, come to naught !"

So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tun'd :
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodg'd in Bethabara, where John baptiz'd,
Musing, and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his God-like office now mature,
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He enter'd now the bordering desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditations thus pursued.

“ O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd !
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good ; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things : therefore, above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that, ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own ;

And was admir'd by all : yet this not all
To which my spirit aspir'd ; victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts ; one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the Earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd :
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear ;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
Mised ; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, ' High are thy thoughts,
O son, but nourish them, and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high ;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless sire,
For know, thou art no son of mortal man ;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy father is the Eternal King who rules
All Heaven and Earth, angels and sons of men ;
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a virgin ; he foretold,
Thou should'st be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
At thy nativity, a glorious quire
Of angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,

Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
For in the inn was left no better room :
A star, not seen before, in Heaven appearing,
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold ;
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in Heaven,
By which they knew the king of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warn'd
By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake,
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.' —
This having heard, straight I again revolv'd
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found, of whom they spake
I am ; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay, even to the death,
Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet, neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited ; when behold
The Baptist, (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight,) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare !
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believ'd was from above ; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him, (for it was shown him so from Heaven,)
Me him, whose harbinger he was ; and first

Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won :
But, as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove ;
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounc'd me his,
' Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd ;' by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes,
The authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet ; perhaps I need not know,
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."

So spake our Morning-star, then in his rise,
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades ;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod ;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon on shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak,
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd ;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
Till those days ended ; hunger'd then at last

Among wild beasts : they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd ; his walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

“ Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this
place

So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcase, pin'd with hunger and with drought.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the Man, whom late
Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God : I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come
forth

To town or village nigh, (nighest is far,)
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new ; fame also finds us out.”

To whom the Son of God. “ Who brought me
hither,

Will bring me hence ; no other guide I seek.”

“ By miracle he may,” replied the swain ;
“ What other way I see not ; for we here

Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born :
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread,
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."

He ended, and the Son of God replied.

" Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not
written,

(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
' Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with manna?' in the mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat, nor drank ;
And forty days Elijah, without food,
Wander'd this barren waste : the same I now :
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"

Whom thus answer'd the arch-fiend, now undis-
guis'd.

" 'Tis true I am that Spirit unfortunate,
Who, leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in the air; nor from the Heaven of
Heavens
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.

I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzēan Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth ;
And, when to all his angels he propos'd
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge ;
For what he bids I do. Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous ; I should so have lost all sense :
What can then be less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds ?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind : why should I ? they to me
Never did wrong or violence ; by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell,
Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer ; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be ; but, long since with woe

Nearer acquainted, now I feel, by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd : [Man,
This wounds me most, (what can it less ?) that
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more."

To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied.
" Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end ;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heaven of Heavens : thou com'st indeed
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of Heaven : the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment : representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King.
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites ?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions ? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths ;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth ; all oracles
By thee are given, and what confess'd more true

Among the nations ? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And not well understood as good not known ?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct,
To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?
For God hath justly given the nations up
To thy delusions ; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous : but, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him, or his angels president
In every province, who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
To thy adorers ? Thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st :
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd ;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles ; henceforth oracles are ceas'd,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos, or elsewhere ;
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living oracle
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know."

So spake our Saviour, but the subtle fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.
" Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urg'd me with hard doings, which not will
But misery hath wrested from me. Where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforc'd oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure ?
But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord ;
From thee I can, and must submit, endure,
Check, or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of Truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to the ear,
And tuneable as sylvan pipe or song ;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth ? Most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore : permit me
To hear thee when I come, (since no man comes,)
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing : and vouchsaf'd his voice
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspir'd : disdain not such access to me."

To whom our Saviour, with unalter'd brow :
" Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid ; do as thou find'st
Permission from above ; thou canst not more."

He added not; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her sullen wings to double-shade
The desert; fowls in their clay-nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

The disciples of Jesus, uneasy at his long absence, reason amongst themselves concerning it. Mary also gives vent to her maternal anxiety: in the expression of which she recapitulates many circumstances respecting the birth and early life of her son. — Satan again meets his infernal council, reports the bad success of his first temptation of our blessed Lord, and calls upon them for counsel and assistance. Belial proposes the tempting of Jesus with women. Satan rebukes Belial for his dissoluteness, charging on him all the profligacy of that kind ascribed by the poets to the heathen gods, and rejects his proposal as in no respect likely to succeed. Satan then suggests other modes of temptation, particularly proposing to avail himself of the circumstance of our Lord's hungering; and, taking a band of chosen spirits with him, returns to resume his enterprise. — Jesus hungers in the desert. — Night comes on; the manner in which our Saviour passes the night is described. —

Morning advances. — Satan again appears to Jesus, and, after expressing wonder that he should be so entirely neglected in the wilderness, where others had been miraculously fed, tempts him with a sumptuous banquet of the most luxurious kind. This he rejects, and the banquet vanishes. — Satan, finding our Lord not to be assailed on the ground of appetite, tempts him again by offering him riches, as the means of acquiring power: this Jesus also rejects, producing many instances of great actions performed by persons under virtuous poverty, and specifying the danger of riches, and the cares and pains inseparable from power and greatness.

MEANWHILE the new-baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah, Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd; I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not nam'd;
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
(So lately found, and so abruptly gone,)
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long,
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come:

Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethsāra ; in Jericho
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city wall'd
On this side the broad lake Genezāret,
Or in Peræa ; but return'd in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen, (no greater men them call,)
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreath'd.

“ Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlook'd for are we fall'n ! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers : we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth ;
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd ;
Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze :
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us ? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation ? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come ;
Behold the kings of the Earth, how they oppress
Thy chosen ; to what height their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee ; arise, and vindicate
Thy glory ; free thy people from their yoke.
But let us wait ; thus far he hath perform'd,

Sent his anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great prophet, pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have convers'd ;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence ; he will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence ;
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return."

Thus they, out of their complaints, new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought :
But, to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none, [pure,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

" O, what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
' Hail highly favour'd among women blest !'
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore ;
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air ; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his ; yet soon enforc'd to fly,
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem ;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years ; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,

Little suspicious to any king ; but now
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice,
I look'd for some great change ; to honour ? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israël, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce : this is my favour'd lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high ;
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest ;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now ? some great intent
Conceals him : when twelve years he scarce had
seen,

I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about
His Father's business ; what he meant I mus'd,
Since understand ; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inur'd ;
My heart hath been a store-house long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events."

Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling :
The while her son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set ;

How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high :
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat ;
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began. [thrones ;
“ Princes, Heaven’s ancient sons, ethereal
Demonian spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call’d
Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble,) such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell ;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequency was impower’d,
Have found him, view’d him, tasted him ; but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,
Though Adam by his wife’s allurements fell,
However to this man inferiour far ;
If he be man by mother’s side, at least
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorn’d,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am return’d, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here : I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand

Or counsel to assist ; lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd."

So spake the old serpent, doubting ; and from all
With clamour was assured their utmost aid
At his command : when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutes spirit that fell,
The sensuallest, and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus ; and thus advis'd.

" Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found :
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky : more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach,
Skill'd to retire, and, in retiring, draw
Hearts after them, tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives."

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
" Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself ; because of old
Thou thyself doat'dst on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,

None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the Earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow, to way-lay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts
Delight not all; among the sons of men,
How many have with a smile made small account
Of Beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;
How he, surnam'd of Africa, dismiss'd,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd:
But he, whom we attempt, is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,

Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,
As sitting queen ador'd on Beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;
How would one look from his majestic brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despis'd, and put to rout
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe! for Beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abash'd.
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy; with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,
Rocks, whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond;
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness:
The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of spirits, likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part:

Then to the desert takes with these his flight :
Where, still from shade to shade, the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said.

“ Where will this end ? four times ten days I've
pass'd

Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite ; that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here ; if nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure ?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks ; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain : so it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm ;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
Me hungering more to do my Father's will.”

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven ; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet :
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn, [brought :
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they
He saw the prophet also, how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept

Under a juniper ; then how awak'd
He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days :
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night ; and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song :
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream ;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd ;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw ;
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud :
Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High-roof'd, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene ;
Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt [round,
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs: he view'd it
When suddenly a man before him stood ;
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city, or court, or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him address'd.
" With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God

In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute ; and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son
Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing angel ; all the race
Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
Rain'd from Heaven manna ; and that prophet bold,
Natiye of Thebez, wandering here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat :
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed." [hence?

To whom thus Jesus. " What conclud'st thou
They all had need ; I, as thou seest, have none."

" How hast thou hunger then ?" Satan replied.
" Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat ?" — " Thereafter as I like
The giver," answer'd Jesus. " Why should that
Cause thy refusal ?" said the subtle fiend.
" Hast thou not right to all created things ?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power ? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offer'd first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;
Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd ? Behold,
Nature asham'd, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store,
To treat thee, as beseems, and as her Lord,
With honour : only deign to sit and eat."

He spake no dream ; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And savour ; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber-steam'd ; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
(Alas, how simply, to these cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve !)
And at a stately side-board, by the wine
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas ; distant more
Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthæa's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since
Of faery damsels, met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelléas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes ; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells,
Such was the splendour ; and the tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd.

“ What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat ?

These are not fruits forbidd'n ; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure ;
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord :
What doubt'st thou, Son of God ? Sit down and eat."

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied.
" Said'st thou not that to all things I had right ?
And who withholds my power that right to use ?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command ?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant
Array'd in glory on my cup to attend :
Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find ?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do ?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guile."

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent.
" That I have also power to give, thou seest ;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why should'st thou not accept it ? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect :
Of these things others quickly will dispose,

Whose pains have earn'd the far-fet spoil." With
that

Both table and provision vanish'd quite
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard :
Only the impórtune tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursued.

" By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd ;
Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite ;
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions : but wherewith to be achiev'd ?
Great acts require great means of enterprise ;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit :
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness ? whence authority deriv'st ?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost ?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms :
What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,
Thy throne, but gold that got him puissant friends ?
Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure héap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me :
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand ;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."

To whom thus Jesus patiently replied.
“ Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
Witness those ancient empires of the Earth,
In height of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd :
But men endued with these have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds ;
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial,) canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus ?
For I esteem those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings.
And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more ?
Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare ; more apt
To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms ? yet not for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies ;
For therein stands the office of a king,

His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.
Yet he, who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king ;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains ;
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly ; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part ;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which, to a generous mind,
So reigning, can be no sincere delight.
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a sceptre, ofttest better miss'd."

Book III.

The Argument.

Satan, in a speech of much flattering commendation, endeavours to awaken in Jesus a passion for glory, by particularising various instances of conquests achieved, and great actions performed, by

persons at an early period of life. Our Lord replies, by showing the vanity of worldly fame, and the improper means by which it is generally attained ; and contrasts with it the true glory of religious patience and virtuous wisdom, as exemplified in the character of Job. Satan justifies the love of glory from the example of God himself, who requires it from all his creatures. Jesus detects the fallacy of this argument, by showing that, as goodness is the true ground on which glory is due to the great Creator of all things, sinful man can have no right whatever to it. — Satan then urges our Lord respecting his claim to the throne of David ; he tells him that the kingdom of Judea, being at that time a province of Rome, cannot be got possession of without much personal exertion on his part, and presses him to lose no time in beginning to reign. ¹Jesus refers him to the time allotted for this, as for all other things ; and, after intimating somewhat respecting his own previous sufferings, asks Satan, why he should be so solicitous for the exaltation of one, whose rising was destined to be his fall. Satan replies, that his own desperate state, by excluding all hope, leaves little room for fear ; and that, as his own punishment was equally doomed, he is not interested in preventing the reign of one, from whose apparent benevolence he might rather hope for some interference in his favour. — Satan still pursues his former incitements ; and, supposing that the seeming reluctance of Jesus to be thus advanced might arise from his being un-

acquainted with the world and its glories, conveys him to the summit of a high mountain, and from thence shows him most of the kingdoms of Asia, particularly pointing out to his notice some extraordinary military preparations of the Parthians to resist the incursions of the Scythians. He then informs our Lord, that he showed him this purposely that he might see how necessary military exertions are to retain the possession of kingdoms, as well as to subdue them at first, and advises him to consider how impossible it was to maintain Judea against two such powerful neighbours as the Romans and Parthians, and how necessary it would be to form an alliance with one or other of them. At the same time he recommends, and engages to secure to him, that of the Parthians; and tells him that by this means his power will be defended from any thing that Rome or Cæsar might attempt against it, and that he will be able to extend his glory wide, and especially to accomplish, what was particularly necessary to make the throne of Judea really the throne of David, the deliverance and restoration of the ten tribes, still in a state of captivity. Jesus, having briefly noticed the vanity of military efforts and the weakness of the arm of flesh, says, that when the time comes for his ascending his allotted throne he shall not be slack : he remarks on Satan's extraordinary zeal for the deliverance of the Israelites, to whom he had always showed himself an enemy, and declares their servitude to be the consequence

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of their idolatry ; but adds, that at a future time it may perhaps please God to recall them, and restore them to their liberty and native land.

So spake the Son of God ; and Satan stood
A while, as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted, and convinc'd
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift ;
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosta.

“ I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do ;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast ; or tongue of seers old,
Infallible : or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These God-like virtues, wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness ? wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spirits, most temper'd pure
Éthereal, who all pleasures else despise,

All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late."

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied.
"Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the
praise?

They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.
The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.

This is true glory and renown, when God,
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises : thus he did to Job,
When to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
He ask'd thee, ' Hast thou seen my servant Job ?'
Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known ;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault : what do these worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring, or remote
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy ;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipt with temple, priest, and sacrifice ?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other ;
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence ;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,

By patience, temperance : I mention still
 Him, whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure ;
 Who names not now with honour patient Job ?
 Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable ?)
 By what he taught, and suffer'd for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death, unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
 Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
 Aught suffer'd ; if young African for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic rage ;
 The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
 Oft not deserv'd ? I seek not mine, but his
 Who sent me ; and thereby witness whence I am."

To whom the tempter murmuring thus replied.
 " Think not so slight of glory ; therein least
 Resembling thy great Father : he seeks glory,
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs ; nor content in Heaven
 By all his angels glorified, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption ;
 Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift,
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
 Promiscuous from all nations, Jew or Greek,
 Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd ;
 From us, his foes pronounc'd, glory he exacts."

To whom our Saviour fervently replied.
 " And reason ; since his word all things produc'd
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,

But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely ; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And, not returning that, would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy ?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence !
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs,
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame ?
Who for so many benefits receiv'd,
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd ;
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs :
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance."

So spake the Son of God ; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin ; for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all ;
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

" Of glory, as thou wilt," said he, " so deem ;
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father ; though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part

Easily from possession won with arms :
Judæa now and all the Promis'd Land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius ; nor is always rul'd
With temperate sway ; oft have they violated
The temple, oft the law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus : and think'st thou to regain
Thy right, by sitting still, or thus retiring ?
So did not Maccabæus : he indeed
Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms ;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
That by strong hand his family obtain'd, [usurp'd,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty ; and zeal and duty are not slow,
But on occasion's forelock watchful wait :
They themselves rather are occasion best ;
Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her heathen servitude.
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign ;
The happier reign, the sooner it begins :
Reign then ; what canst thou better do the while ?”
To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
“ All things are best fulfill'd in their due time ;
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.
If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,
That it shall never end, so, when begin,
The Father in his purpose hath decreed ;
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.

What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd; just trial, ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee, when I begin
My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou
Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?"

To whom the tempter, inly rack'd, replied.
"Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace: what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear:
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst: worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose;
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemn'd;
And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign, or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly could I fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,

(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell,)
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, should'st be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st, in deep thoughts detain'd
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high ;
No wonder ; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider,
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days' [serve ?
Short sojourn ; and what thence could'st thou ob-
The world thou hadst not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever
Timorous and loth ; with novice modesty,
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom,)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous :
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state ;
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries ; that thou may'st know
How their best opposition to withstand.' [took
With that, (such power was given him then,) he

The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretch'd in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant ; from his side two rivers flow'd,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champaign with less rivers interven'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea :
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine ; [hills ;
With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the
Huge cities and high-tower'd, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs ; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain-top the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

“ Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league ; here thou behold'st
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake ; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond : to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drought :
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns ;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,

Till Cyrus set them free ; Persepolis,
His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there ;
Ecbatāna her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates ;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings : of later fame,
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxāta, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian (now some ages past
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire) under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power ; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana ; to her aid
He marches now in haste ; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit ;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel ;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings."

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-pour'd, light-armed troops,
In coats of mail and military pride ;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound ;

From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrceanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales ;
From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd, [shot
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown :
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indors'd with towers
Of archers ; nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke ;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons, fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry :
At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd,
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

“ That thou may'st know I seek not to engage

Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety ; hear and mark,
To what end I have brought thee hither, and shown
All this fair sight : thy kingdom, though foretold
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain ; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means ;
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
But, say thou wert possess'd of David's throne,
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew ; how could'st thou hope
Long to enjoy it, quiet and secure,
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian ? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own ; the Parthian first
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyr̄canus, bound,
Maugre the Roman : it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose,
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league :
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly re-install thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes,
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd :
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,

This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus, unmov'd.
" Much ostentation vain of fleshy arm
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear,
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth nought.
Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne :
My time, I told thee, (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off,) is not yet come :
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons,
But whence to thee this zeal ? Where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numbering Israël, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites

By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then; the same that now to me!
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtarothe,
And all the idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers; but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain;
And God with idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow; and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? No; let them serve
Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length, (time to himself best known,)
Remembering Abraham, by some wonderful call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste;
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promis'd Land their fathers pass'd;
To his due time and providence I leave them."

So spake Israel's true king, and to the fiend
Made answer meet, that made void his wiles.
So fares it, when with truth falsehood contends.

Book IV.

The Argument.

Satan, persisting in the temptation of our Lord, shows him imperial Rome in its greatest pomp and splendour, as a power which he probably would prefer before that of the Parthians; and tells him that he might with the greatest ease expel Tiberius, restore the Romans to their liberty, and make himself master not only of the Roman Empire, but by so doing of the whole world, and inclusively of the throne of David. Our Lord, in reply, expresses his contempt of grandeur and worldly power, notices the luxury, vanity, and profligacy of the Romans, declaring how little they merited to be restored to that liberty, which they had lost by their misconduct, and briefly refers to the greatness of his own future kingdom. Satan, now desperate, to enhance the value of his proffered gifts, professes that the only terms, on which he will bestow them, are our Saviour's falling down and worshipping him. Our Lord expresses a firm but temperate indignation at such a proposition, and rebukes the tempter by the title of "Satan for ever damned." Satan, abashed, attempts to justify himself: he then assumes a new ground of temptation, and proposing to Jesus the intellectual gratifications of wisdom and knowledge, points out

to him the celebrated seat of ancient learning, Athens, its schools, and other various resorts of learned teachers and their disciples; accompanying the view with a highly-finished panegyric on the Grecian musicians, poets, orators and philosophers of the different sects. Jesus replies, by showing the vanity and insufficiency of the boasted heathen philosophy; and prefers to the music, poetry, eloquence and didactic policy of the Greeks, those of the inspired Hebrew writers. Satan, irritated at the failure of all his attempts, upbraids the indiscretion of our Saviour in rejecting his offers; and having, in ridicule of his expected kingdom, foretold the sufferings that our Lord was to undergo, carries him back into the wilderness, and leaves him there. Night comes on: Satan raises a tremendous storm, and attempts further to alarm Jesus with frightful dreams, and terrific threatening spectres; which, however, have no effect upon him. A calm, bright, beautiful morning succeeds to the horrors of the night. Satan again presents himself to our blessed Lord, and, from noticing the storm of the preceding night as pointed chiefly at him, takes occasion once more to insult him with an account of the sufferings which he was certainly to undergo. This only draws from our Lord a brief rebuke. Satan, now at the height of his desperation, confesses that he had frequently watched Jesus from his birth, purposely to discover if he was the true Messiah; and, col-

lecting from what passed at the river Jordan that he most probably was so, he had from that time more assiduously followed him, in hopes of gaining some advantage over him, which would most effectually prove that he was not really that Divine Person destined to be his "fatal enemy." In this he acknowledges that he has hitherto completely failed; but still determines to make one more trial of him. Accordingly he conveys him to the Temple at Jerusalem, and, placing him on a pointed eminence, requires him to prove his divinity either by standing there, or casting himself down with safety. Our Lord reproves the tempter, and at the same time manifests his own divinity by standing on this dangerous point. Satan, amazed and terrified, instantly falls; and repairs to his infernal compeers to relate the bad success of his enterprise. Angels in the mean time convey our blessed Lord to a beautiful valley, and, while they minister to him a repast of celestial food, celebrate his victory in a triumphant hymn.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
The tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve:
So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve:
This far his over-match, who, self-deceiv'd
And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:

But as a man, who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for every spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more ;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound ;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash'd, the assault renew
(Vain battery !) and in froth or bubbles end ;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and, on the north,
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills [men,
That screen'd the fruits of the earth, and seats of
From cold Septentrion blast ; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches, and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues, and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens, and groves, presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interpos'd :
(By what strange parallax, or optic skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass

Of telescope, were curious to inquire .)

And now the tempter thus his silence broke.

“ The city which thou seest, no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the Earth,
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations ; there the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable ; and there mount Palatine
The imperial palace, compass huge and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements conspicuous far,
Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires :
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods, (so well I have dispos'd
My aery microscope,) thou may'st behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers,
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in ;
Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state,
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings :
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian ; some from farthest south,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroë, Nilotic isle ; and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea ;
From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these ;

From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreath'd ;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west ;
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay ;
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth, and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly mayst prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd ;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Capreæ, an island small, but strong,
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy ;
Committing to a wicked favourite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious ;
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues, as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a stye, and, in his place ascending,
A victor people free from servile yoke !
And with my help thou may'st ; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world ;

Aim at the highest : without the highest attain'd,
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."

To whom the Son of God, unmov'd, replied.
" Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye, [tell
Much less my mind ; though thou should'st add to
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read,)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, emboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl ; to me should'st tell, who
thirst

And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh : what honour that,
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries ? Then proceed'st to talk
Of the emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously : I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster ; what if I withal
Expel a devil who first made him such ?
Let his tormenter conscience find him out ;
For him I was not sent ; nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base ;
Deservedly made vassal ; who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all

By lust and rapine ; first ambitious grown
 Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;
 Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd ;
 Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
 And from the daily scene effeminate,
 What wise and valiant man would seek to free
 These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd ?
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?
 Know therefore, when my season comes to sit
 On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
 Spreading and overshadowing all the Earth ;
 Or as a stone, that shall to pieces dash
 All monarchies besides throughout the world ;
 And of my kingdom there shall be no end :
 Means there shall be to this ; but what the means,
 Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."

To whom the tempter, impudent, replied.
 " I see all offers made by me how slight
 Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st :
 Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
 Or nothing more than still to contradict ;
 On the other side know also thou, that I
 On what I offer set as high esteem,
 Nor what I part with mean to give for nought ;
 All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
 The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give,
 (For, given to me, I give to whom I please,)
 No trifle ; yet with this reserve, not else,
 On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superior lord,

(Easily done,) and hold them all of me ;
For what can less so great a gift deserve ?”

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain,
“ I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less ;
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition :
But I endure the time, till which expir'd
Thou hast permission on me. It is written, [ship
The first of all commandments, ‘ Thou shalt wor-
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve ;’
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurs'd ? now more accurs'd
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous ; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given ?
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd ;
Other donation none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme ? If given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid ! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me, the Son of God ?
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st
That Evil-one, Satan for ever damn'd. ”

To whom the fiend, with fear abash'd, replied.
“ Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though sons of God both angels are and men,
If I, to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd

What both from men and angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the Earth,
Nations beside from all the quarter'd winds,
God of this world invok'd, and world beneath :
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me most fatal, me it most concerns ;
The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem ;
Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more
Advise thee ; gain them as thou canst, or not.
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
Than to a worldly crown ; addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the temple, there wast found
Among the gravest rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair, [man,
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the
As morning shows the day : be famous then
By wisdom ; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote ;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light,
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st ;
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,

Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd.
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount.
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil;
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream: within the walls, then view
The schools of ancient sages; his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand; and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes
And his, who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own:
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd

In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions and high passions best describing :
Thence to the famous orators repair
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne :
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heaven descended to the low-roof'd house
Of Socrates ; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd
Wisest of men ; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that water'd all the schools
Of academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicuræan, and the Stoic severe ;
These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire join'd."

To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied.
" Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not ; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought : he, who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true ;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew ;
The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits ;

A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense ;
Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life ;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease ;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride,
By him call'd virtue ; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas ! what can they teach and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending ?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue ; and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none ;
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not ; or, by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome ; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek ?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep vers'd in books, and shallow in himself,

Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge ;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language, can I find
That solace ? All our law and story strew'd
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd ;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
The Holiest of Holies, and his saints,
(Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,)
Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence ; statist indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic unaffected style,

Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
These only with our law best form a king."

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan, now
Quite at a loss, (for all his darts were spent,)
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied.

" Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
For thee is fittest place ; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee ; yet remember
What I foretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously, my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season
When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.
Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
Or Heaven write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate
Attend thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death ;
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern not ;
Nor when ; eternal sure, as without end,

Without beginning ; for no date prefix'd
Directs me in the starry rubric set."

So saying he took, (for still he knew his power
Not yet expir'd,) and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As day-light sunk, and brought in lowering night,
Her shadowy offspring ; unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.
Our Saviour meek, and with untroubled mind
After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades, [shield
Whose branching arms thick intertwin'd might
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head ;
But, shelter'd, slept in vain ; for at his head
The tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep. And either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heaven : the clouds,
From many a horrid rift, abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd : nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken ! Nor yet staid the terrour there ;
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round [shriek'd,
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some

Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace !
Thus pass'd the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice gray ;
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the fiend had rais'd
To tempt the Son of God with terrours dire.
And now the Sun with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The prince of darkness ; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came ;
Yet with no new device, (they all were spent,)
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood ;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said.

“ Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night : I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle ; but myself [them
Was distant ; and these flaws, though mortals fear
As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of Heaven,

Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone ;
Yet, as being oft-times noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill :
This tempest at this desert most was bent ;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne, no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told ?
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt ;
For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means. Each act is rightliest done
Not when it must, but when it may be best :
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold ;
Whereof this ominous night, that clos'd thee round,
So many terrours, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign."

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And staid not, but in brief him answer'd thus :

" Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm
Those terrours, which thou speak'st of, did me none ;

I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatening high : what they can do as signs
Betokening, or ill-boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;
Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit ! and wouldst be thought my God ;
And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will ! desist, (thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain,) nor me in vain molest."

To whom the fiend, now swoln with rage, replied.
" Then hear, O son of David, virgin-born,
For son of God to me is yet in doubt ;
Of the Messiah I had heard foretold
By all the prophets ; of thy birth at length,
Announc'd by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred ;
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flock to the Baptist, I, among the rest,
(Though not to be baptiz'd,) by voice from Heaven
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my-nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God ; which bears no single sense.
The Son of God I also am, or was ;
And if I was, I am ; relation stands ;

All men are sons of God ; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declar'd :
"Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild ;
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy :
Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is ; his wisdom, power, intent :
By parl or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can :
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant, and, as a centre, firm :
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more ; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemn'd, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must now begin."

So saying he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires :
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn.

"There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright

Will ask thee skill ; I to thy Father's house [best :
Have brought thee, and highest plac'd : highest is
Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :
For it is written, ' He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
They shall up-lift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.' "

To whom thus Jesus : " Also it is written,
' Tempt not the Lord thy God.' " He said, and
stood :

But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
As when Earth's son Antæus, (to compare
Small things with greatest,) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and, oft foil'd, still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
Throttled at length in the air, expir'd and fell ;
So, after many a foil, the tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride,
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall :
And as that Theban monster, that propos'd
Her riddle, and him who solv'd it not devour'd,
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep ;
So, struck with dread and anguish, fell the fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
(Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,)
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell ; and straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,

Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air ;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
And, from the fount of life, ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impair'd,
Or thirst ; and, as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the tempter proud.

“ True image of the Father ; whether thron'd
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
Wandering the wilderness ; whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with God-like force endued
Against the attempter of thy Father's throne,
And thief of Paradise ! him long of old
Thou didst rebel, and down from Heaven cast
With all his army ; now thou hast aveng'd
Supplant'd Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke :
For, though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,

A Saviour, art come down to re-install,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal serpent ! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down
Under his feet : for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound, (yet not thy last and deadliest wound,)
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph : in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God : he, all unarm'd,
Shall chase thee, with the terrour of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy legions : yelling they shall fly
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time. —
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan ! on thy glorious work
Now enter ; and begin to save mankind.'

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refresh'd,
Brought on his way with joy ; he, unobserv'd,
Home to his mother's house private return'c'.

SAMSON AGONISTES,

A DRAMATIC POEM.

ARISTOT. *Poet.* cap. 6.*Τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, κ. τ. λ.*

Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum illustrationem.

*Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is called
Tragedy.*

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terrour, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so, in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy

to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33. ; and Paræus, commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his Ajax, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is entitled Christ suffering. This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes ; happening, through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity ; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd ; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle ; in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us

passes for best, thus much before-hand may be epistled ; that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather followed as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather Apolelymenon, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung ; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material ; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called Allæostropa. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such economy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with versimilitude and decorum ; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

The Argument.

Samson, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which makes the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can ; then by his old father Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom ; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption ; who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons ; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence ; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come ; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him : the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance : in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself ; wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.

MANOAH, the father of Samson.

DALILA, his wife.

HARAPHA of Gath.

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON, [Attendant leading him.]

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on ;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade :
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
Where I, a prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught : but here I feel amends,
The breath of Heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire. —
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works ; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me ; hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind

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From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His God-like presence, and from some great act
Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task [strength,
With this Heaven-gifted strength? O glorious
Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke:
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,

O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong !
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command !
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know :
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries ;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me ;
They creep, yet see ; I, dark in light, expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own ;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !

O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
“ Let there be light, and light was over all ;”
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree !
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part ; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confin'd,
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd ?
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through every pore ?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried ; but, O yet more miserable !
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave ;
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs ;
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these ? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way ;
Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

[Enter CHORUS.]

Chor. This, this is he ; softly a while,
Let us not break in upon him :
O change beyond report, thought, or belief !
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
With languish'd head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandon'd,
And by himself given over ;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and soil'd ;
Or do my eyes misrepresent ? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renown'd,
Irresistible Samson ? whom unarm'd [withstand ;
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid :
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron ;
And, weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
Adamantéan proof ?
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanc'd,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold As-
calonite
Fled from his-lion ramp ; old warriors turn'd .
Their plated backs under his heel ;
Or, groveling, soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,

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A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day. [bore
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul, [plain)
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause com-
Imprison'd now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on Earth unparallel'd!
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wonderful glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth,
Or the sphere of fortune, raises;
But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the Earth,
Universally crown'd with highest praises.

Sams. I hear the sound of words ; their sense the
air

Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He speaks, let us draw nigh. — Match-
less in might,

The glory late of Israel, now the grief ;
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
To visit or bewail thee ; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores ; apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to fester'd wounds. [learn

Sams. Your coming, friends, revives me ; for I
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription, (of the most
I would be understood ;) in prosperous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have enclos'd me round :
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
Blindness ; for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
How could I once look up or heave the head,
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwreck'd
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd ; and for a word, a tear,
Fool ! have divulg'd the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman ? tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
In every street ? do they not say, how well
Are come upon him his deserts ? yet why ?

Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean ;
This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
These two, proportion'd ill, drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal ; wisest men
Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd ;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides :
Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sams. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel : they knew not
That what I motion'd was of God ; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
The marriage on ; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely call'd.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had ! fond wish too late,)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end ; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors : of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself, [ness!]
Who, vanquish'd with a peal of words, (O weak-
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provok

The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast amiss, I bear thee witness :
Yet Israël still serves with all his sons.

Sams. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors
Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd,
Deliverance offer'd : I on the other side
Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds ; [doer :
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords, the Philistines, with gather'd powers
Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd ;
Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them, what advantag'd best :
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round ;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey, [threads
Bound with two cords ; but cords to me were
Touch'd with the flame : on their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth ; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom they now serve :
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,

Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
As their deliverer? if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penueh
Their great deliverer contemn'd,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings:
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
In that sore battle, when so many died
Without reprieve, adjudg'd to death,
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

Sams. Of such examples add me to the roll;
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be, who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be, who doubt his ways not just,

As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution ;
Till, by their own perplexities involv'd,
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstruction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt ;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor, in respect of the enemy, just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste. [down,

Down, reason, then ; at least vain reasonings,
Though reason here aver,
That moral verdict quits her of unclean :
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see, here comes thy reverend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoah : advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

Sams. Ay me ! another inward grief, awak'd
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

[*Enter MANOAH.*]

Man. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,

Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after; say if he be here.

Chor. As signal now in low dejected state,
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,
None offering fight; who single combatant
Duell'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and oh! what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our bane?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,
And such a son as all men hail'd me happy; —
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?

For this did the angel twice descend ? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men ; then in an hour
Ensna'r'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foe's derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves ?
Alas ! methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sams. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father ;
Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly ; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause : if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have prophan'd
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
But warn'd by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals ? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd
Her spurious first-born, treason against me ?
Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,

And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
'Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself ;
Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandish'd parlies, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not, day nor night,
To storm me over-watch'd, and wearied out.
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolv'd,
Might easily have shook off all her snares :
But foul effeminacy held me yok'd
Her bond-slave ; O indignity, O blot
To honour and religion ! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment !
The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
These rags, this grinding is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this
That saw not how degenerately I serv'd.
. *Man.* I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son,
Rather approv'd them not ; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that ; this I am sure, our foes

Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph ; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee ; which to have kept
Tacit was in thy power : true ; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more the burthen of that fault ;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains ;
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza ; and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifices and praises loud,
To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no God, compar'd with idols,
Disglorified, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine ;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

Sams. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high
Among the heathen round : to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
Of idolists, and atheists ; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols ;

Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end : all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon ; Dagon hath presum'd,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
But will arise, and his great name assert :
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and
these words

I as a prophecy receive ; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done ?
Thou must not, in the meanwhile here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight,
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom : well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sams. Spare that proposal, father ; spare the trouble

Of that solicitation ; let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment ;
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front ? But I
God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully ; a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite ;
But act not in thy own affliction, son :
Repent the sin ; but, if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids ;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself : perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt ;
Who ever more approves, and more accepts,
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission,)
Him, who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due ;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means ; who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee

Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renew'd ?

Sams. His pardon I implore ; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it ? when in strength
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts,
Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walk'd about admir'd of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swoll'n with pride into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life.
At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
Shaven, and disarm'd among mine enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou couldst repress ; nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods or men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sams. Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,

I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refresh'd : nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

Sams. But what avail'd this temperance, not
complete

Against another object more enticing ?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquish'd ? by which means,
Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dishonour'd,
quell'd,

To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven impos'd,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone ; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object, these redundant locks
Robustious to no purpose clustering down,
Vain monument of strength ; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure ?
Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread ;
Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,
Consume me, and oft-invoked death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with
that gift

Which was expressly given thee to annoy them ?

Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
 Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age outworn.
 But God, who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
 And I persuade me so; why else this strength
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
 His might continues in thee not for nought,
 Nor shall his wonderous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sams. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
 Nor the other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
 My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems
 In all her functions weary of herself;
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest. [ceed

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which pro-
 From anguish of the mind and humours black,
 That mingle with thy fancy. I however
 Must not omit a father's timely care
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
 By ransom, or how else: meanwhile be calm,
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.
 [Exit.]

Sams. O that torment should not be confin'd
 To the body's wounds and sores,
 With maladies innumerable
 In heart, head, breast, and reins;

But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage ;
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or med'cinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure :
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nurseling once, and choice delight,
His destin'd from the womb,
Promis'd by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up, and thriv'd amain ;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies :
But now hath cast me off as never known,

And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope ;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless :
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition, speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude :
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incidents to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought
Lenient of grief and anxious thought :
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint ;
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man !
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rul'st
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.

Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer-fly,
Heads without name no more remember'd ;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect :
Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon, [regard
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
high,

Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission ;
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd ;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd
In crude old age ;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days : in fine,
Just, or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
 The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
 What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
 Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
 His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end. —

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
 Female of sex it seems,
 That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,
 Comes this way sailing
 Like a stately ship
 Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
 Of Javan or Gadire
 With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
 Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
 Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
 An amber scent of odorous perfume
 Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
 Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;
 And now at nearer view, no other certain
 Than Dalila thy wife. [near me.]

Sams. My wife! my traitress: let her not come

Chor. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes
 thee fix'd,

About to have spoke; but now, with head declin'd,
 Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps,
 And words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,
 Wetting the borders of her silken veil:
 But now again she makes address to speak.

[*Enter DALILA.*]

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,

Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge ; yet, if tears
May expiate, (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw,)
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
No way assur'd. But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate, misdeed.

Sams. Out, out, hyæna ! these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change ;
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail :
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits ;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguil'd,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson ; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that on the other side, if it be weigh'd
By itself, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First, granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, impórtune,
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults :
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is, for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety ?
To what I did thou show'd'st me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not :
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's
frailty :
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind.
Thine forgive mine ; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mind towards thee,
Caus'd what I did ? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou would'st leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest :

No better way I saw than by impórtuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety : thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd ? I was assur'd by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody, and hold :
That made for me ; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed ;
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have past for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps :
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sams. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine !
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears : I gave, thou say'st, the example,
I led the way : bitter reproach, but true ;
I to myself was false ere thou to me ;
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather

Confess it feign'd: weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it; weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,
Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, press'd how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroy'd
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious

Dishonourer of Dagon : what had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments ?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest : at length that ground'd maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevail'd ;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.

Sams. I thought where all thy circling wiles
would end ;

In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy !
But had thy love, still odiously pretended, [thee
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I, before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, lov'd thee, as thou well thou knew'st ;
Too well ; unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpower'd
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;
Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
Did'st thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe profess'd ?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country ; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs ; if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations ;
No more thy country, but an impious crew

Of men conspiring to uphold their state
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
 For which our country is a name so dear ;
 Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal moved thee ;
 To please thy gods thou didst it ; gods, unable
 To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 Of their own deity, gods cannot be ;
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd or fear'd.
 These false pretexts, and varnish'd colours failing,
 Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear ?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
 Goes by the worse whatever be her cause. [breath ;
Sams. For want of words no doubt, or lack of
 Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.
 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson ;
 Afford me place to show what recompense
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
 Misguided ; only what remains past cure
 Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
 To afflict thyself in vain : though sight be lost,
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
 Where other senses want not their delights
 At home in leisure and domestic ease,
 Exempt from many a care and chance, to which
 Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
 I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsome prison-house to abide
 With me, where my redoubled love and care

With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age,
With all things grateful cheer'd, and so supplied,
That, what by me thou hast lost, thou least shalt
miss.

Sams. No, no ; of my condition take no care ;
It fits not ; thou and I long since are twain ;
Nor think me so unwary or accurs'd,
To bring my feet again into the snare [trains,
Where once I have been caught : I know thy
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils ;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,
No more on me have power ; their force is null'd ;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd,
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st
hate me

Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me ;
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd and scorn'd,
And last neglected ? How would'st thou insult,
When I must live uxurious to thy will
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile ?
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy
hand. [wake

Sams. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance

My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee ; go with that ;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives !
Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason ! so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers, than winds and seas ; yet winds to seas
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore :
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest, never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd ?
To mix with thy concerns I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-fac'd, is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds ;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defam'd,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save

Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands ; my tomb
With odours visited and annual flowers ;
Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim
Jael, who with hospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nail'd.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward,
Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
Which to my country I was judg'd to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own. [Exit.]

Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

Sams. So let her go ; God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secresy, my safety, and my life. [power,

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sams. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit ;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
(Which way soever men refer it,)
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferr'd
Thy paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd,
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherous
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
Of constancy no root infix'd,
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry enslav'd
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
Imbark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favour'd of Heaven, who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines:
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:

But virtue, which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour :
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not sway'd
By female usurpation, or dismay'd.
But had we best retire ? I see a storm. [rain.

Sams. Fair days have oft contracted wind and

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Sams. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are
past.

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward ; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace ? what wind hath blown him
hither

I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

Sams. Or peace, or not, alike to me he comes.

Chor. His fraught we soon shall know, he now
arrives.

[Enter HARAPHA.]

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,

Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old
That Kiriathaim held; thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd,
Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

Sams. The way to know were not to see but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art fam'd
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recover'd
To Palestine, won by a Philistine,
From the unforeskinn'd race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts; that honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out. [but do

Sams. Boast not of what thou would'st have done,
What then thou would'st; thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

Sams. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betray'd,

Who durst not with their whole united powers
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her marriage-faith to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assign'd
Some narrow place enclos'd, where sight may give
thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant-brace and greves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield ;
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clatter'd iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast
Again in safety what thou would'st have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious
arms,

Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou
from Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth, was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

Sams. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me
At my nativity this strength, diffus'd
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple, invoke his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
With the utmost of his Godhead seconded :
Then thou shalt see, or rather, to thy sorrow,
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be ;
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrâdes,
As good for nothing else ; no better service
With those thy boisterous locks, no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

Sams. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve, and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me

Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant :
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose God is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in
trusting

He will accept thee to defend this cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber !

Sams. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou
prove me these ?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords ?
Their magistrates confess'd it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
Into our hands : for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes ?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sams. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe ;
And in your city held my nuptial feast :
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrain'd the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.

When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
 As on my enemies, wherever chanc'd,
 I us'd hostility, and took their spoil,
 To pay my underminers in their coin.
 My nation was subjected to your lords ;
 It was the force of conquest : force with force
 Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
 But I a private person, whom my country
 As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
 Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
 I was no private, but a person rais'd [Heaven,
 With strength sufficient, and command from
 To free my country ; if their servile minds
 Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
 But to their masters gave me up for nought,
 The unworthier they ; whence to this day they serve
 I was to do my part from Heaven assign'd,
 And had perform'd it, if my known offence
 Had not disabled me, not all your force :
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant, [tempts,
 Though by his blindness maim'd for high at-
 Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
 As a petty enterprise of small enforce. [roll'd,
Har. With thee ! a man condemn'd, a slave en-
 Due by the law to capital punishment !
 To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.
Sams. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to
 survey me,
 To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict ?
 Come nearer ; part not hence so slight inform'd ;
 But take good heed my hand survey not thee.
Har. O Baal-zebub ! can my ears unus'd

Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sams. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand

Fear I incurable ; bring up thy van,
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sams. Go, baffled coward ! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee. [*Exit.*]

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crestfallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

Sams. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee. [*fight*

Sams. He must allege some cause, and offer'd
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not ;
And, that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain ;
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove

My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence ;
The worst that he can give to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppress'd !
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the Earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honour truth ;
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats,
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour arm'd ;
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless ; while
With winged expedition,
Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surpris'd,
Lose their defence, distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victory over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men ; but sight bereav'd

May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
For I descry this way
Some other tending ; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears
Comes on amain, speed in his look,
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand :
His message will be short and voluble.

[*Enter OFFICER.*]

Off. Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

Chor. His manacles remark him, there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say ;
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games :
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly :
Rise therefore with all speed, and come along,
Where I will see thee hearten'd, and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

Sams. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore
tell them,
Our law forbids at their religious rites
My presence ; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assur'd, will not content
them.

Sams. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers, and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
But they must pick me out, with shackles tir'd,
And over-labour'd at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
On my refusal to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

Sams. Myself? my conscience, and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
To show them feats, and play before their god,
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sams. So take it with what speed thy message
needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

[*Exit.*]

Sams. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow
indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd
Up to the height, whether to hold or break:
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

Sams. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression, so requite
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols?
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon!
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, prophane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the
Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

Sams. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts
defile not. [tence holds.

Sams. Where outward force constrains, the sen-
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind; which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my
reach.

Sams. Be of good courage ; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
Our captive at the public mill, our drudge,
And dar'st thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming ? come without delay ;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

Sams. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection ;
And for a life who will not change his purpose ?
(So mutable are all the ways of men ;)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

Off. I praise thy resolution : doff these links :
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sams. Brethren, farewell ; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends ; and how the sight
Of me, as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,
I know not : lords are lordliest in their wine ;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd
With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd ,
No less the people, on their holy-days,
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable :
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide [name
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his
Great among the Heathen round ;
Send thee the angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire ; that spirit, that first rush'd on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need.
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. —
But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
With youthful steps ? much livelier than ere while
He seems ; supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news ?

[*Enter MANOAH.*]

Man. Peace with you, brethren ; my inducement
hither

Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords now parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came, the city rings,
And numbers thither flock : I had no will,
Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly.
But that, which mov'd my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee ; say, reverend sire, we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner.
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite ;
That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests :
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and state
They easily would set to sale : a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough reveng'd ; having reduc'd
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were propos'd.
What noise or shout was that ? it tore the sky.

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold

Their once great dread, captive, and blind before
them,

Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And number'd down : much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego

And quit : not wanting him, I shall want nothing

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all ;
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd :
And I persuade me, God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair,
Garrison'd round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service ;
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength. [vain

Chor Thy hopes are not ill-founded, nor seem

Of his delivery, and the joy thereon
 Conceiv'd, agreeable to a father's love,
 In both which we, as next, participate. [noise! —

Man. I know your friendly minds and — O what
 Mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that
 Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
 As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!
 Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,
 Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise:
 Oh! it continues, they have slain my son.

Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry
 From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
 What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

Chor. Best keep together here, lest, running
 thither,

We unawares run into danger's mouth.
 This evil on the Philistines is fall'n:
 From whom could else a general cry be heard?
 The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;
 From other hands we need not much to fear.
 What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
 Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
 He now be dealing dole among his foes,
 And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
 For his people of old; what hinders now?

Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will,
 Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
 A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner ;
For evil news rides post, while good news bates.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An Hebrew as I guess, and of our tribe.

[*Enter MESSENGER.*]

Mess. O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold ?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoah, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concern'd. [thee

Man. The accident was loud, and here before
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not ;
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n. [saddest

Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not
The desolation of a hostile city. [surfeit

Mess. Feed on that first: there may in grief be

Man. Relate by whom.

Mess. By Samson.

Man. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mess. Ah ! Manoah, I refrain too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon ;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep. [out.

Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them

Mess. Take then the worst in brief, Samson is
dead. [feated

Man. The worst indeed, O all my hopes de-
To free him hence ! but death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost !
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
How died he ; death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st : by whom fell he ?
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound ?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell. [plain.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then, or how ? ex-

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence ? what cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes ?

Mess. Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy, and be destroy'd ;
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself !
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know ; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,

Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city ;
And, as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd
Through each high street : little I had despatch'd,
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games ;
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
Half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold !
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand ;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice [wine,
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad ; before him pipes,
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot, before him and behind
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their God with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place ; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assay'd,

To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
All with incredible, stupendous force ;
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission's sake they led him
Between the pillars ; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He, unsuspecting, led him ; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,
And eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who pray'd,
Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd :
At last with head erect thus cried aloud,
“ Hitherto, lords, what your commands impos'd
I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld :
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.”
This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson, with these immix'd, inevitably

Pull'd down the same destruction on himself ;
The vulgar only 'scap'd who stood without.

Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
Among thy slain self-kill'd,
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
Thee with thy slaughter'd foes, in number more
Than all thy life hath slain before. [sublime,

1. *Semichor.* While their hearts were jocund and
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary :
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urg'd them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer ;
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweectingly impórtun'd
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fall'n into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

2. *Semichor.* But he, though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,

His fiery virtue rous'd
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts
And nests in order rang'd
Of tame villatic fowl ; but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue, given for lost,
Depress'd, and overthrown, as seem'd,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay ere while a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
Revives, refflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deem'd ;
And, though her body die, her fame survives
A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come ; no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause ; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds, to Israel
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ;
To himself and father's house eternal fame ;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail

Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soak'd in his enemies' blood ; and from the stream
With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while,
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay,)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy, and funeral train,
Home to his father's house : there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts inroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high :
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers ; only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously ; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist

His uncontrollable intent;
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience, from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature in awe to him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She wooes the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-ey'd Peace;
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding

Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing ;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes an universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around :
 The idle spear and shield were high up hung ;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood ;
 The trumpet spake not to the armed throng ;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light
 His reign of peace upon the Earth began :
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kist,
 Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed
 wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fix'd in stedfast gaze,
 Bending one way their precious influence ;
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
 Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence ;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,

The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame

The new-enlighten'd world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree, could
bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,

Sat simply chatting in a rustic row ;
Full little thought they then,
That the mighty Pan

Was kindly come to live with them below ;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet

Their hearts and ears did greet,

As never was by mortal finger strook ;

Divinely-warbled voice

Answering the stringed noise,

As all their souls in blissful rapture took :

The air, such pleasure loth to lose,

With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly
close.

Nature that heard such sound,

Beneath the hollow round

Of Cynthia's seat, the aery region thrilling,

Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling ;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light, [array'd ;
That with long beams the shamefac'd night
The helmed Cherubim,
And sworded Seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born
Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanc'd world on hinges hung ;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel
keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so ;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time ;
And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow ;

And with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold ;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould ;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering
day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Thron'd in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so,
The babe yet lies in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss ;
So both himself and us to glorify :
Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through
the deep ;

With such a horrid clang
As on mount Sinai rang, [brake :
While the red fire and smould'ring clouds out-
The aged Earth aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake ;
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his
throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins ; for, from this happy day,
The old Dragon, under ground
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway ;
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-ey'd priests from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament ;

▲ ▲ 2

From haunted spring and dale,
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent ;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets
mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth, [plaint ;
The Lars, and Lemures, moan with midnight
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint ;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine ;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with taper's holy shine ;
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz
mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue ;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue :

The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud:
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest ;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud ;
In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark
The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipt ark.

He feels from Judah's land
The dreaded infant's hand,
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn ;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands controll the damned
crew.

So, when the Sun in bed,
Curtain'd with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave ;
And the yellow-skirted Fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-lov'd
maze.

A A S

But see, the Virgin blest

Hath laid her babe to rest ;

Time is, our tedious song should here have ending.

Heaven's youngest-teemed star

Hath fix'd her polish'd car,

Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending:

And all about the courtly stable

Bright-harness'd angels sit in order serviceable,

WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER, born at Coleshill, Hertfordshire, in March, 1605, was the son of Robert Waller, Esq. a gentleman of an ancient family and good fortune, who married a sister of the celebrated John Hampden. The death of his father during his infancy left him heir to an estate of 3500*l.* a year, at that period an ample fortune. He was educated first at Eton, whence he was removed to King's College in Cambridge. His election to parliament was as early as between his sixteenth or seventeenth year; and it was not much later that he made his appearance as a poet: and it is remarkable that a copy of verses which he addressed to Prince Charles, in his eighteenth year, exhibits a style and character of versification as perfectly formed as those of his maturest productions. He again served in parliament before he was of age; and he continued his services to a later period. Not insensible of the value of wealth, he augmented his paternal fortune by marriage with a rich city heiress. In the long intermissions of parliament which occurred after

1628, he retired to his mansion of Beaconsfield, where he continued his classical studies, under the direction of his kinsman Morley, afterwards bishop of Winchester; and he obtained admission to a society of able men and polite scholars, of whom Lord Falkland was the connecting medium.

Waller became a widower at the age of twenty-five; he did not, however, spend much time in mourning, but declared himself the suitor of Lady Dorothea Sydney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he has immortalized under the poetical name of *Saccharissa*. She is described by him as a majestic and scornful beauty; and he seems to delight more in her contrast, the gentler *Amoret*, who is supposed to have been a Lady Sophia Murray. Neither of these ladies, however, was won by his poetic strains; and, like another man, he consoled himself in a second marriage.

When the king's necessities compelled him, in 1640, once more to apply to the representatives of the people, Waller, who was returned for Agmondesham, decidedly took part with the members who thought that the redress of grievances should precede a vote for supplies; and he made an energetic speech on the occasion. He continued during three years to vote in general with the Opposition in the Long Parliament, but did not enter into all their measures. In particular, he employed much cool argument against the proposal for the abolition of Episcopacy; and he spoke with freedom and severity against some other plans of the House. In fact, he was at length become a zealous loyalist

in his inclinations ; and his conduct under the difficulties into which this attachment involved him became a source of his indelible disgrace. A short narrative will suffice for the elucidation of this matter.

Waller had a brother-in-law, named Tomkyns, who was clerk of the queen's council, and possessed great influence in the city among the warm loyalists. On consulting together, they thought it would be possible to raise a powerful party, which might oblige the parliament to adopt pacific measures, by resisting the payment of the taxes levied for the support of the war. About this time Sir Nicholas Crispe formed a design of more dangerous import, which was that of exciting the king's friends in the city to an open resistance of the authority of parliament ; and for that purpose he obtained a commission of array from his majesty. This plan appears to have been originally unconnected with the other ; yet the commission was made known to Waller and Tomkyns, and the whole was compounded into a horrid and dreadful plot. Waller and Tomkyns were apprehended, when the pusillanimity of the former disclosed the whole secret. " He was so confounded with fear," (says Lord Clarendon,) " that he confessed whatever he had heard, said, thought, or seen, all that he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of others, without concealing any person, of what degree or quality soever, or any discourse which he had ever upon any occasion entertained with them." The conclusion of this business was, that Tomkyns,

and Chaloner, another conspirator, were hanged, and that Waller was expelled the House, tried, and condemned ; but after a year's imprisonment, and a fine of ten thousand pounds, was suffered to go into exile. He chose Rouen for his first place of foreign exile, where he lived with his wife till his removal to Paris. In that capital he maintained the appearance of a man of fortune, and entertained hospitably, supporting this style of living chiefly by the sale of his wife's jewels. At length, after the lapse of ten years, being reduced to what he called his *rump* jewel, he thought it time to apply for permission to return to his own country. He obtained this licence, and was also restored to his estate, though now diminished to half its former rental. Here he fixed his abode, at a house built by himself, at Beaconsfield ; and he renewed his courtly strains by adulation to Cromwell, now Protector, to whom his mother was related. To this usurper the noblest tribute of his muse was paid.

When Charles II. was restored to the crown, and past character was lightly regarded, the stains of that of Waller were forgotten, and his wit and poetry procured him notice at court, and admission to the highest circles. He had also sufficient interest to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, in all the parliaments of that reign. The king's gracious manners emboldened him to ask for the vacant place of provost of Eton college, which was granted him ; but Lord Clarendon, then Lord Chancellor, refused to set the seal to the grant,

allegding that by the statutes laymen were excluded from that provostship. This was thought the reason why Waller joined the Duke of Buckingham, in his hostility against Clarendon.

On the accession of James II., Waller, then in his 80th year, was chosen representative for Saltash. Having now considerably passed the usual limit of human life, he turned his thoughts to devotion, and composed some divine poems, the usual task in which men of gaiety terminate their career. He died at Beaconsfield in October, 1687, the 83d year of his age. He left several children by his second wife, of whom, the inheritor of his estate, Edmund, after representing Agmondesham in parliament, became a convert to quakerism.

Waller was one of the earliest poets who obtained reputation by the sweetness and sonorousness of his strains ; and there are perhaps few masters at the present day who surpass him in this particular.

TO AMORET.

FAIR ! that you may truly know,
What you unto Thyrsis owe ;
I will tell you how I do
Sacharissa love, and you.

Joy salutes me, when I set
My blest eyes on Amoret :

But with wonder I am strook,
While I on the other look.

If sweet Amoret complains,
I have sense of all her pains :
But for Sacharissa I
Do not only grieve, but die.

All that of myself is mine,
Lovely Amoret ! is thine,
Sacharissa's captive fain
Would untie his iron chain ;
And, those scorching beams to shun,
To thy gentle shadow run.

If the soul had free election
To dispose of her affection ;
I would not thus long have borne
Haughty Sacharissa's scorn :
But 'tis sure some power above,
Which controls our wills in love !

If not a love, a strong desire
To create and spread that fire
In my breast, solicits me,
Beauteous Amoret ! for thee.

'Tis amazement more than love,
Which her radiant eyes do move :
If less splendour wait on thine,
Yet they so benignly shine,
I would turn my dazzled sight
To behold their milder light.
But as hard 'tis to destroy
That high flame, as to enjoy :
Which how eas'ly I may do,
Heaven (as eas'ly scal'd) does know !

Amoret ! as sweet and good
As the most delicious food,
Which, but tasted, does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.

Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness doth incline :
Such a liquor, as no brain
That is mortal can sustain.

Scarce can I to Heaven excuse
The devotion, which I use
Unto that adored dame :
For 'tis not unlike the same,
Which I thither ought to send.
So that if it could take end,
'Twould to Heaven itself be due,
To succeed her, and not you :
Who already have of me
All that's not idolatry :
Which, though not so fierce a flame,
Is longer like to be the same.

Then smile on me, and I will prove
Wonder is shorter-liv'd than love.

TO AMORET.

AMORET, the Milky Way,
Fram'd of many nameless stars !
The smooth stream, where none can say,
He this drop to that prefers !

Amoret, my lovely foe !
Tell me where thy strength does lie ?
Where the power that charms us so ?
In thy soul, or in thy eye ?

By that snowy neck alone,
Or thy grace in motion seen,
No such wonders could be done ;
Yet thy waist is straight, and clean,
As Cupid's shaft, or Hermes' rod :
And powerful too, as either god.

OF LOVE.

ANGER, in hasty words, or blows,
Itself discharges on our foes ;
And sorrow too finds some relief
In tears, which wait upon our grief :
So every passion but fond love,
Unto its own redress does move :
But that alone the wretch inclines
To what prevents his own designs ;
Makes him lament, and sigh, and weep,
Disorder'd, tremble, fawn, and creep ;
Postures which render him despis'd,
Where he endeavours to be priz'd :
For women, born to be control'd,
Stoop to the forward and the bold ;
Affect the haughty and the proud,
The gay, the frolic, and the loud.

Who first the generous steed oppress ;
Not kneeling did salute the beast ;
But with high courage, life, and force,
Approaching, tam'd th' unruly horse.
Unwisely we the wiser East
Pity, supposing them oppress,
With tyrants' force, whose law is will,
By which they govern, spoil, and kill :
Each nymph, but moderately fair,
Commands with no less rigour here.
Should some brave Turk, that walks among
His twenty lasses, bright and young,
And beckons to the willing dame,
Preferr'd to quench his present flame,
Behold as many gallants here,
With modest guise, and silent fear,
All to one female idol bend,
While her high pride does scarce descend
To mark their follies, he would swear,
That these her guard of eunuchs were ;
And that a more majestic queen,
Or humbler slaves, he had not seen.

All this with indignation spoke,
In vain I struggled with the yoke
Of mighty love : that conquering look,
When next beheld, like lightning strook
My blasted soul, and made me bow
Lower than those I pity'd now.

So the tall stag, upon the brink
Of some smooth stream, about to drink,
Surveying there his armed head,
With shame remembers that he fled

The scorned dogs, resolves to try
The combat next : but, if their cry
Invades again his trembling ear,
He strait resumes his wonted care ;
Leaves the untasted spring behind,
And, wing'd with fear, outflies the wind.

OF THE

MARRIAGE OF THE DWARFS.

DESIGN or Chance make others wive,
But Nature did this match contrive :
Eve might as well have Adam fled,
As she deny'd her little bed
To him, for whom Heav'n seem'd to frame,
And measure out this only dame.

Thrice happy is that humble pair,
Beneath the level of all care !
Over whose heads those arrows fly
Of sad distrust and jealousy :
Secured in as high extreme,
As if the world held none but them.

To him the fairest nymphs do show
Like moving mountains topp'd with snow ;
And every man a Polypheme
Does to his Galatea seem :
None may presume her faith to prove ;
He proffers death, that proffers love.

Ah ! Chloris ! that kind Nature thus
From all the world had sever'd us :
Creating for ourselves us two,
As Love has me for only you !

A PANEGYRIC

TO MY LORD PROTECTOR,

*Of the Present Greatness, and Joint Interest, of his
Highness and this Nation.*

WHILE with a strong, and yet a gentle, hand,
You bridle faction, and our hearts command,
Protect us from ourselves, and from the foe,
Make us unite, and make us conquer too :

Let partial spirits still aloud complain,
Think themselves injur'd that they cannot reign,
And own no liberty, but where they may
Without control upon their fellows prey.

Above the waves as Neptune show'd his face,
To chide the winds, and save the Trojan race ;
So has your highness, rais'd above the rest,
Storms of ambition, tossing us, repress.

Your drooping country, torn with civil hate,
Restor'd by you, is made a glorious state ;
The seat of empire, where the Irish come,
And the unwilling Scots, to fetch their doom.

The sea's our own : and now, all nations greet,
With bending sails, each vessel of our fleet :
Your power extends as far as winds can blow,
Or swelling sails upon the globe may go.

Heaven (that hath plac'd this island to give law,
To balance Europe, and her states to awe,)
In this conjunction doth on Britain smile,
The greatest leader, and the greatest isle !

Whether this portion of the world were rent,
By the rude ocean, from the continent,
Or thus created ; it was sure design'd
To be the sacred refuge of mankind.

Hither th' oppress'd shall henceforth resort,
Justice to crave, and succour, at your court ;
And then your highness, not for our's alone,
But for the world's protector shall be known.

Fame, swifter than your winged navy, flies
Through every land, that near the ocean lies ;
Sounding your name, and telling dreadful news
To all that piracy and rapine use.

With such a chief the meanest nation blest,
Might hope to lift her head above the rest :
What may be thought impossible to do
By us, embraced by the sea and you ?

Lords of the world's great waste, the ocean, we
Whole forests send to reign upon the sea ;
And every coast may trouble, or relieve :
But none can visit us without your leave.

Angels and we have this prerogative,
That none can at our happy seats arrive :
While we descend at pleasure, to invade
The bad with vengeance, and the good to aid.

Our little world, the image of the great,
Like that, amidst the boundless ocean set,
Of her own growth hath all that nature craves,
And all that's rare, as tribute from the waves.

As Egypt does not on the clouds rely,
But to the Nile owes more than to the sky ;
So, what our Earth, and what our Heaven, denies,
Our ever-constant friend, the sea, supplies.

The taste of hot Arabia's spice we know,
Free from the scorching sun that makes it grow :
Without the worm, in Persian silks we shine ;
And, without planting, drink of every vine.

To dig for wealth, we weary not our limbs ;
Gold, though the heaviest metal, hither swims.
Ours is the harvest where the Indians mow,
We plough the deep, and reap what others sow.

Things of the noblest kind our own soil breeds ;
Stout are our men, and warlike are our steeds :
Rome, though her eagle through the world had flown,
Could never make this island all her own.

Here the third Edward, and the Black Prince too,
France-conquering Henry flourish'd, and now you ;
For whom we stay'd, as did the Grecian state,
Till Alexander came to urge their fate.

When for more worlds the Macedonian cry'd,
He wist not Thetis in her lap did hide
Another yet : a world reserv'd for you,
To make more great than that he did subdue.

He safely might old troops to battle lead,
Against th' unwarlike Persian and the Mede,
Whose hasty flight did, from a bloodless field,
More spoils than honour to the victor yield.

A race unconquer'd, by their clime made bold,
The Caledonians, arm'd with want and cold,
Have, by a fate indulgent to your fame,
Been from all ages kept for you to tame.

Whom the old Roman wall, so ill confin'd,
With a new chain of garrisons you bind :
Here foreign gold no more shall make them come ;
Our English iron holds them fast at home.

They, that henceforth must be content to know
No warmer region than their hills of snow,
May blame the sun ; but must extol your grace,
Which in our senate hath allow'd them place.

Prefer'd by conquest, happily o'erthrown,
Falling they rise, to be with us made one :
So kind dictators made, when they came home,
Their vanquish'd foes free citizens of Rome.

Like favour find the Irish, with like fate
Advanc'd to be a portion of our state ;
While by your valour, and your bounteous mind,
Nations divided by the sea are join'd

Holland, to gain your friendship, is content
To be our out-guard on the continent :
She from her fellow-provinces would go,
Rather than hazard to have you her foe.

In our late fight, when cannons did diffuse,
Preventing posts, the terrour and the news,
Our neighbour princes trembled at their roar :
But our conjunction makes them tremble more.

Your never-failing sword made war to cease,
And now you heal us with the acts of peace ;
Our minds with bounty and with awe engage,
Invite affection, and restrain our rage.

Less pleasure take brave minds in battles won,
Than in restoring such as are undone :
Tigers have courage, and the rugged bear,
But man alone can, whom he conquers, spare.

To pardon, willing, and to punish, loth,
You strike with one hand, but you heal with both ;
Lifting up all that prostrate lie, you grieve
You cannot make the dead again to live.

When Fate or error had our age misled,
And o'er this nation such confusion spread ;
The only cure, which could from Heaven come down,
Was so much power and piety in one.

One ! whose extraction from an ancient line
Gives hope again, that well-born men may shine :
The meanest in your nature, mild and good ;
The noblest rest secured in your blood.

Oft have we wonder'd, how you hid in peace
A mind proportion'd to such things as these ;
How such a ruling sp'rit you could restrain,
And practise first over yourself to reign.

Your private life did a just pattern give,
How fathers, husbands, pious sons, should live ;
Born to command, your princely virtues slept,
Like humble David's, while the flock he kept.

But when your troubled country call'd you forth,
Your flaming courage and your matchless worth,
Dazzling the eyes of all that did pretend,
To fierce contention gave a prosperous end.

Still, as you rise, the state, exalted too,
Finds no distemper while 'tis chang'd by you ;
Chang'd like the world's great scene ! when without
noise,
The rising sun night's vulgar lights destroys.

Had you, some ages past, this race of glory
Run, with amazement we should read your story :
But living virtue, all achievements past,
Meets envy still, to grapple with at last.

This Cæsar found ; and that ungrateful age,
With losing him, went back to blood and rage ;
Mistaken Brutus thought to break their yoke,
But cut the bond of union with that stroke.

That sun once set, a thousand meaner stars
Gave a dim light to violence and wars ;
To such a tempest as now threatens all,
Did not your mighty arm prevent the fall.

If Rome's great senate could not wield that sword,
Which of the conquer'd world had made them lord ;
What hope had ours, while yet their power was new,
To rule victorious armies, but by you ?

You ! that had taught them to subdue their foes,
Could order teach, and their high spirits compose :
To every duty could their minds engage,
Provoke their courage, and command their rage.

So, when a lion shakes his dreadful mane,
And angry grows, if he that first took pain
To tame his youth, approach the haughty beast,
He bends to him, but frights away the rest.

As the vex'd world, to find repose, at last
Itself into Augustus' arms did cast ;
So England now does, with like toil oppress,
Her weary head upon your bosom rest.

Then let the Muses, with such notes as these,
Instruct us what belongs unto our peace !
Your battles they hereafter shall indite,
And draw the image of our Mars in fight ;

Tell of towns storm'd, of armies over-run,
And mighty kingdoms by your conduct won ;
How, while you thunder'd, clouds of dust did choke
Contending troops, and seas lay hid in smoke.

Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse,
And every conqueror creates a Muse :
Here in low strains your milder deeds we sing :
But there, my lord ! we'll bays and olive bring

To crown your head, while you in triumph ride
O'er vanquish'd nations, and the sea beside ;
While all your neighbour princes unto you,
Like Joseph's sheaves, pay reverence and bow.

OF ENGLISH VERSE.

POETS may boast, as safely vain,
Their works shall with the world remain :
Both bound together, live or die,
The verses and the prophecy.

But who can hope his line should long
Last, in a daily-changing tongue ?
While they are new, envy prevails ;
And as that dies, our language fails.

When architects have done their part,
The matter may betray their art :
Time, if we use ill-chosen stone,
Soon brings a well-built palace down.

Poets, that lasting marble seek,
Must carve in Latin or in Greek :
We write in sand, our language grows,
And, like the tide, our work o'erflows.

Chaucer his sense can only boast,
The glory of his numbers lost !
Years have defac'd his matchless strain,
And yet he did not sing in vain.

The beauties, which adorn'd that age,
The shining subjects of his rage,
Hoping they should immortal prove,
Rewarded with success his love.

This was the gen'rous poet's scope ;
And all an English pen can hope ;
To make the fair approve his flame,
That can so far extend their fame.

Verse, thus design'd, has no ill fate,
If it arrive but at the date
Of fading beauty, if it prove
But as long-liv'd as present love.

THE STORY OF

PHŒBUS AND DAPHNE

APPLIED.

THYRSIS, a youth of the inspired train,
Fair Sacharissa lov'd, but lov'd in vain :
Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy ;
Like Daphne she, as lovely, and as coy !
With numbers he the flying nymph pursues ;
With numbers, such as Phœbus' self might use !
Such is the chase, when Love and Fancy leads,
O'er craggy mountains, and through flowery meads ;
Invok'd to testify the lover's care,
Or form some image of his cruel fair.

Urg'd with his fury, like a wounded deer,
O'er these he fled ; and now approaching near,
Had reach'd the nymph with his harmonious lay,
Whom all his charms could not incline to stay.
Yet, what he sung in his immortal strain,
Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain :
All, but the nymph that should redress his wrong,
Attend his passion, and approve his song.
Like Phœbus thus, acquiring unsought praise,
He catch'd at love, and fill'd his arms with bays.

SONG.

Go, lovely Rose !
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet, and fair, she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spy'd,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended dy'd.

Small is the worth
Of beauty, from the light retir'd :
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desir'd,
And not blush so to be admir'd.

Then die ! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee :
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair !

TO PHYLLIS.

PHYLLIS ! why should we delay
Pleasures shorter than the day ?
Could we (which we never can !)
Stretch our lives beyond their span,
Beauty like a shadow flies,
And our youth before us dies.
Or, would youth and beauty stay,
Love hath wings, and will away.
Love hath swifter wings than Time ;
Change in love to Heaven does climb ;
Gods, that never change their state,
Vary oft their love and hate.

Phyllis ! to this truth we owe
All the love betwixt us two :
Let not you and I inquire,
What has been our past desire ;
On what shepherd you have smil'd,
Or what nymphs I have beguil'd :
Leave it to the planets too,
What we shall hereafter do :
For the joys we now may prove,
Take advice of present love.

ON A GIRDLE.

THAT, which her slender waist confin'd,
Shall now my joyful temples bind :
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my Heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer :
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move !

A narrow compass ! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair :
Give me but what this ribbon bound,
Take all the rest the Sun goes round.

TO ZELINDA.

FAIREST piece of well-form'd earth !
Urge not thus your haughty birth :
The power which you have o'er us, lies
Not in your race, but in your eyes.
None but a prince ! — Alas ! that voice
Confines you to a narrow choice.
Should you no honey vow to taste,
But what the master-bees have plac'd
In compass of their cells, how small
A portion to your share would fall !

Nor all appear, among those few,
Worthy the stock from whence they grew :
The sap, which at the root is bred,
In trees, through all the boughs is spread :
But virtues, which in parent shine,
Make not like progress through the line.
'Tis not from whom, but where, we live :
The place does oft those graces give.
Great Julius, on the mountains bred,
A flock perhaps, or herd, had led :
He *, that the world subdued, had been
But the best wrestler on the green.
'Tis art, and knowledge, which draw forth
The hidden seeds of native worth :
They blow those sparks, and make them rise
Into such flames as touch the skies.
To the old heroes hence was given
A pedigree, which reach'd to heaven :
Of mortal seed they were not held,
Which other mortals so excell'd.
And beauty too, in such excess
As yours, Zelinda ! claims no less.
Smile but on me, and you shall scorn,
Henceforth, to be of princes born.
I can describe the shady grove,
Where your lov'd mother slept with Jove, ..
And yet excuse the faultless dame,
Caught with her spouse's shape and name .
Thy matchless form will credit bring
To all the wonders I shall sing.

* Alexander.

c c 3

TO A LADY

SINGING A SONG OF HIS COMPOSING.

CLORIS, yourself you so excel,
When you vouchsafe to breathe my thought,
That, like a spirit, with this spell
Of my own teaching, I am caught.

That eagle's fate and mine are one,
Which, on the shaft that made him die,
Espy'd a feather of his own,
Wherewith he wont to soar so high.

Had Echo with so sweet a grace
Narcissus' loud complaints return'd,
Not for reflection of his face,
But of his voice, the boy had burn'd.

JOHN DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN was born, probably in 1631, in the parish of Aldwinckle-Allsaints, in Northamptonshire. His father possessed a small estate, acted as a justice of the peace during the usurpation, and seems to have been a presbyterian. John, at a proper age, was sent to Westminster school, of which Busby was then master; and was thence elected to a scholarship in Trinity college, Cambridge. He took his degrees of bachelor and master of arts in the university; but though he had written two short copies of verses about the time of his admission, his name does not occur among the academical poets of this period. By his father's death, in 1654, he succeeded to the estate, and, removing to the metropolis, he made his entrance into public life, under the auspices of his kinsman, Sir Gilbert Pickering, one of Cromwell's council and house of lords, and staunch to the principles then predominant. On the death of Cromwell, Dryden wrote some "Heroic Stanzas," strongly

marked by the loftiness of expression and variety of imagery which characterised his more mature efforts. They were, however, criticised with some severity.

At the Restoration, Dryden lost no time in obliterating former stains; and, as far as it was possible, rendered himself peculiarly distinguished for the base servility of his strains. He greeted the king's return by a poem, entitled "*Astræa Redux*," which was followed by "*A Panegyric on the Coronation*:" nor did Lord Chancellor Clarendon escape his encomiastic lines. His marriage with Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, is supposed to have taken place in 1665. About this time he first appears as a writer for the stage, in which quality he composed several pieces; and though he did not display himself as a prime favourite of the dramatic muse, his facility of harmonious versification, and his splendour of poetic diction, gained him admirers. In 1667 he published a singular poem, entitled "*Annus Mirabilis*," the subjects of which were, the naval war with the Dutch, and the fire of London. It was written in four-line stanzas, a form which has since gone into disuse in heroic subjects; but the piece abounded in images of genuine poetry, though intermixed with many extravagances.

At this period of his life Dryden became professionally a writer for the stage, having entered into a contract with the patentees of the King's Theatre, to supply them with three plays in a year, upon the condition of being allowed the profit

of one share and a quarter out of twelve shares and three quarters, into which the theatrical stock was divided. Of the plays written upon the above contract, a small proportion have kept their place on the stage, or in the closet. On the death of Sir W. Davenant, in 1668, Dryden obtained the post of poet-laureat, to which was added the sinecure place of historiographer royal; the joint salaries of which amounted to 200 l.

The tragedies composed by Dryden were written in his earlier periods, in rhyme, which circumstance probably contributed to the poetical rant by which they were too much characterised. For the correction of this fault, Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in conjunction with other wits, wrote the celebrated burlesque drama, entitled "The Rehearsal," of which Dryden, under the name of Bayes, was made the hero; and, in order to point the ridicule, his dress, phraseology, and mode of recitation, were exactly imitated by the actor. It does not, however, appear that his solid reputation as a poet was injured by this attack. He had the candour to acknowledge that several of the strokes were just, and he wisely refrained from making any direct reply.

In 1681, and, as it is asserted, at the king's express desire, he wrote his famous political poem, entitled "Absolom and Achitophel;" in which the incidents in the life of David were adapted to those of Charles II. in relation to the Duke of Monmouth and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Its poetry and its severity caused it to be read with great

eagerness; and as it raised the author to high favour with the court party, so it involved him in irreconcilable enmity with its opponents. These feelings were rendered more acute by his "Medal, a Satire on Sedition," written in the same year, on occasion of a medal struck by the whigs, when a grand jury returned *Ignoramus* to an indictment preferred against Lord Shaftesbury, for high treason. The rancour of this piece is not easily to be paralleled among party poems. In 1682, he published "Mac-Flecknoe," a short piece, throwing ridicule upon his very unequal rival, Shadwell. In the same year, one of his most serious poems, the "Religio Laici," made its appearance. Its purpose was to give a compendious view of the arguments for revealed religion, and to ascertain in what the authority of revelation essentially consists.

Soon after this time he ceased to write for the stage. His dramatic vein was probably exhausted, and his circumstances were distressed. To this period Mr. Malone refers a letter written by him to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, in which, with modest dignity, he pleads merit enough not to deserve to starve, and requests some small employment in the customs or excise, or, at least, the payment of half a year's pension for the supply of his present necessities. He never obtained any of the requested places, and was doomed to find the booksellers his best patrons.

Charles II. died in 1685, and was succeeded by his brother James II., who openly declared his attachment to the religion of Rome. It was not long

before Dryden conformed to the same religion. This step has been the cause of much obloquy on one side, and has found much excuse on the other ; but if it be considered, from a view of his past life, that, in changing his religious profession, he could have had little difficulty to encounter, it will appear no breach of candour to suppose that his immediate motive was nothing more than personal interest. The reward he obtained from his compliance was an addition to his pension of 100 l. per annum. Some time after he was engaged in a work which was the longest single piece he ever composed. This was his elaborate controversial poem of " The Hind and Panther." When completed, notwithstanding its unpromising subject, and signal absurdity of plan, such was the power of Dryden's verse, that it was read with avidity, and bore every mark of occupying the public attention. The birth of a prince called forth a congratulatory poem from Dryden, entitled " Britannia Rediviva," in which he ventured to use a poet's privilege of prophesy, foretelling a commencing era of prosperity to the nation and the church from this auspicious event; but in vain ! for the revolution took place within a few months, and the hopes of the party were blasted for ever.

Dryden was a severe sufferer from the change : his posts and pensions were taken away, and the poetical laurel was conferred upon his insignificant rival, Shadwell. He was now, in advanced life, to depend upon his own exertions for a security from absolute indigence. His faculties were equal to the emergency ; and it will surprise some theorists

to be told, that the ten concluding years of his life, in which he wrote for bread, and composed at a certain rate per line, were those of many of the pieces which have most contributed to immortalise his name. They were those of his translation of Juvenal and Persius ; of that of Virgil entire, a work which enriches the English language, and has greatly promoted the author's fame ; of his celebrated Alexander's Feast ; and of his Fables, containing some of the richest and most truly poetical pieces which he ever composed. Of these, several will appear in the subsequent collection of his works. Nor ought his prose writings to be neglected, which, chiefly consisting of the critical essays prefixed to his poems, are performances of extraordinary vigour and comprehension of mind, and afford, perhaps, the best specimens of genuine English.

Dryden died of a spreading inflammation in one of his toes, on the first of May, 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, next to the tomb of Chaucer. No monument marked his grave, till a plain one, with his bust, was erected, at the expence of Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. He left behind him three sons, all brought up to letters. His own character was cold and reserved, backward in personal advances to the great, and rather heavy in conversation. In fact, he was too much engaged in literature to devote much of his time to society. Few writers of his time delighted so much to approach the verge of prophaneness ; whence it may be inferred, that though religion was an interesting topic of discussion to him, he had very little of its spirit in his heart.

ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666.

IN thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
 Crouching at home and cruel when abroad:
 Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
 Our king they courted, and our merchants aw'd.

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,
 Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost:
 Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
 And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.

For them alone the Heavens had kindly heat;
 In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
 For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,
 And in hot Ceilon spicy forests grew.

The Sun but seem'd the labourer of the year;
 Each waxing Moon supply'd her watery store,
 To swell those tides which from the line did bear
 Their brim-full vessels to the Belgian shore.

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
 And swept the riches of the world from far;
 Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong:
 And this may prove our second Punic war.

What peace can be, where both to one pretend?
 (But they more diligent, and we more strong)
 Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
 For they would grow too powerful were it long.

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Behold two nations then, engag'd so far,
That each seven years the fit must shake each land:
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.

See how he feeds th' Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain :
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand ;
And prudently would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

This saw our king ; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanc'd to and fro :
He griev'd the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.

His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay ;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

The loss and gain each fatally were great ;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war :
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each other's poize and counterbalance are.

He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain ;
Yet judg'd, like vapours that from limbecs rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.

At length resolv'd t' assert the watery ball,
He in himself did whole armadoes bring :
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king.

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey ;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies ;
And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

Whether they unctuous exhalations are,
Fir'd by the Sun, or seeming so alone ;
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown :

Or one, that bright companion of the Sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king ;
And now, a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

Victorious York did first with fam'd success,
To his known valour make the Dutch give place :
Thus Heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.

But since it was decreed, auspicious king,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson should beslain.

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament :
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.

Their chief blown up in air, not waves, expir'd,
To which his pride presum'd to give the law :
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retir'd,
And all was Britain the wide ocean saw.

To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay aw'd :
So reverently men quit the open air,
When thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.

And now approach'd their fleet from India fraught,
With all the riches of the rising Sun :
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store, [bring:
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coasts they
There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
And Winter brooded on the eastern Spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie :
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake th' unequal war :
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy :
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy.

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly :
Some precious by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find :
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

Nor wholly lost we so deserv'd a prey ;
For storms, repenting, part of it restor'd :
Which, as a tribute from the Baltic sea,
The British ocean sent her mighty lord.

Go, mortals, now and vex yourselves in vain
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come :
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.

The son, who twice three months on th' ocean tost,
Prepar'd to tell what he had pass'd before,
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,
And parents' arms, in vain, stretch'd from the shore.

This careful husband had been long away,
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn :
Who on their fingers learn'd to tell the day
On which their father promis'd to return.

Such are the proud designs of human-kind,
And so we suffer shipwreck every where !
Alas, what port can such a pilot find,
Who in the night of Fate must blindly steer !

The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill,
Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides :
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides.

Let Munster's prelate ever be accurst,
In whom we seek the German faith in vain :
Alas, that he should teach the English first,
That fraud and avarice in the church could reign !

Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
Whose friendship's in his interest understood !
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good.

Till now, alone the mighty nations strove ;
The rest, at gaze, without the lists did stand ;
And threatening France, plac'd like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.

That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade,
Who envies us what he wants power t' enjoy ;
Whose noisy valour does no foe invade,
And weak assistance will his friends destroy.

Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show :
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.

With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite :
France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave.
But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave.

Lewis had chas'd the English from his shore ;
But Charles the French as subjects does invite :
Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who, by their mercy, may decide their right !

Were subjects so but only by their choice,
And not from birth did forc'd dominion take,
Our prince alone would have the public voice ;
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make.

He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before :
As honour made him first the danger choose,
So still he makes it good on virtue's score.

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who in that bounty to themselves are kind :
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
And in his plenty their abundance find.

With equal power he does two chiefs create,
Two such as each seem'd worthiest when alone ;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own.

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise ;
Their duty, faith, and interest too the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise.

The prince long time had courted Fortune's love,
But once possess'd did absolutely reign :
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,
And conquer'd first those beauties they would gain.

The duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage, which he ruin'd, rise once more ;
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.

Together to the watery camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show :
Infants' first vows for them to Heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go.

With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
To infect a navy with their gaudy fears ;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain :
But war severely like itself appears.

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect :
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.

Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a fam'd commander, bold :
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

The duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies :
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight ;
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air :
Th' Elean plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

Borne each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order move :
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfix'd, and floating nations strove.

Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack ;
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind :
And, in its eye, more closely they come back,
To finish all the deaths they left behind.

On high-rai'd decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go :
Such port the elephant bears, and so defy'd
By the rhinoceros her unequal foe.

And as the built, so different is the fight :
Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd ;
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,
And through the yielding planks a passage find.

Our dreaded admiral from far they threat,
Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives :
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves.

Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought ;
But he who meets all danger with disdain,
Ev'n in their face his ship to anchor brought,
And steeple-high stood propt upon the main.

At this excess of courage, all amaz'd,
The foremost of his foes awhile withdraw :
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gaz'd,
Who on high chairs the godlike fathers saw.

And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanc'd, and there the Greek ;
Ours o'er the duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.

Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore ;
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.

Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce th' important quarrel to decide :
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide.

They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet.
Berkeley alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Creüsa meet.

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave :
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame :
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And slumbering smile at the imagin'd flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, 'who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie :
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run !
Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.

* In dreams they fearful precipices tread :
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore .
Or in dark churches walk among the dead ;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till from their main-top joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian lions bear.

Our watchful general had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe :
He sigh'd, but like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never till now unwilling to obey ;
They, not their wounds, but want of strength, deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay.

Then to the rest, " Rejoice," said he, " to-day ;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies :
Among so brave a people, you are they
Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.

" If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunn'd, not met our foes :
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell :
Courage from hearts, and not from numbers
grows."

He said, nor needed more to say : with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go ;
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe.

Nor did th' encourag'd Belgians long delay,
But bold in others, not themselves, they stood :
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.

Our little fleet was now engag'd so far,
That like the sword-fish in the whale they fought :
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage
wrought :

Never had valour, no not ours, before
Done aught like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain.

The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
And armed Edwards look'd with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which Fate promis'd them their Charles
should rise.

Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chace-guns through our sterns they
send :

Close by, their fire-ships, like jackals, appear,
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

Silent, in smoke of cannon they come on :
Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide :
In these the height of pleas'd revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceiv'd themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling Etnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

Now at each tack our little fleet grows less ; [main :
And, like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain,

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind?

The dastard crow, that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud kaws her craven kind does bring,
Who safe in numbers cuff the noble bird.

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare :
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly ;
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Cæsar, decently to die.

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought :
And generously with his despair he strove,
Resolv'd to live till he their safety wrought.

Let other Muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restor'd :
But mine shall sing of his eclips'd estate,
Which, like the Sun's, more wonders does afford.

He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs :
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise.

His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscur'd them from the foe ;
Thus Israel, safe from the Egyptian's pride,
By flaming pillars and by clouds did go.

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue :
So Xenophon once led that fam'd retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

The foe approach'd ; and one for his bold sin
Was sunk ; as he that touch'd the ark was slain ;
The wild waves master'd him and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood :
As if they had been there as servants set
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue but wait on his retreat.

So Libyan huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady coverts rous'd, the lion chase :
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round :
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night ;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore ;
And weary waves withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore.

The Moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the deck our careful general stood,
And deeply mus'd on the succeeding day.

" That happy Sun," said he, " will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see :
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me.

" Yet, like an English general will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave :
Women and cowards on the land may lie ;
The sea 's a tomb that 's proper for the brave."

Restless he pass'd the remnant of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaim'd the morning nigh :
And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.

But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard :
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,
And solitary guns are scarcely heard.

Thus far had Fortune power, he forc'd to stay,
Nor longer durst with Virtue be at strife :
This is a ransom Albemarle did pay,
For all the glories of so great a life.

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad general knows :
With full-spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows.

The anxious prince had heard the cannon long,
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatch'd, and Dutch too strong,
Who never fought three days, but to pursue.

Then, as an eagle, who with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eiry does repair,
And finds her callow infants forc'd away :

Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,
The broken air loud whistling as she flies :
She stops and listens, and shoots forth again,
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.

With such kind passion hastes the prince to fight,
And spreads his flying canvass to the sound :
Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now absent every little noise can wound.

As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain :
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feather'd train :

With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute th' appearance of the prince's fleet ;
And each ambitiously would claim the ken,
That with first eyes did distant safety meet.

The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.

Full in the prince's passage, hills of sand,
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay,
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
And seamen with dissembled depths betray.

The wily Dutch, who like fall'n angels fear'd
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.

But he unmov'd contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight :
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight.

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance, not th' appearance, chose :
To rescue one such friend, he took more pride,
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.

But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
Rupert and Albemarle together grow :
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.

x x 3

The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supply'd,
Now long to execute their spleenful will :
And, in revenge for those three days they try'd,
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the Sun stood still.

Thus reforc'd, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way :
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
And bring night back upon the new-born day.

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men :
It seem'd as slaughter had been breath'd all night,
And Death new pointed his dull dart again.

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
And matchless courage, since the former fight :
Whose navy like a stiff-stretch'd cord did show,
Till he bore in and bent them into flight.

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
His open side, and high above him shows :
Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,
And doubly harm'd he double harms bestows.

Behind the general mends his weary pace,
And sullenly to his revenge he sails :
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
And long behind his wounded volume trails

Th' increasing sound is borne to either shore,
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear :
Their passions double with the cannons' roar.
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

Ply'd thick and close as when the fight begun,
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away :
So sicken waneing Moons too near the Sun,
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

And now reduc'd on equal terms to fight,
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show ;
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,
And shun each other's shadows as they grow.

The warlike prince had sever'd from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main ;
Which with his one so vigorously he press'd,
And flew so home they could not rise again,

Already batter'd, by his lee they lay,
In vain upon the passing winds they call :
The passing winds through their torn canvass play,
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.

Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let into shades below ;
Without grim Death rides barefac'd in their sight,
And urges entering billows as they flow.

When one dire shot, the last they could supply
Close by the board the prince's main-mast bore :
All three now helpless by each other lie,
And this offends not, and those fear no more.

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tir'd before the dog she lay :
Who stretch'd behind her pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill, as she to get away.

With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey ;
His warm breath blows her flix up as she lies ;
She, trembling, creeps upon the ground away,
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

The prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on ;
For what they to his courage did refuse,
By mortal valour never must be done.

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home :
Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

The general's force, as kept alive by flight,
Now, not oppos'd, no longer can pursue :
Lasting till Heaven had done his courage right ;
When he had conquer'd he his weakness knew.

He casts a frown on the departing foe,
And sighs to see him quit the watery field :
His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
For all the glories which the fight did yield.

Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
He stands confess'd ev'n by the boastful Dutch :
He only does his conquest disavow,
And thinks too little what they found too much.

Return'd, he with the fleet resolv'd to stay ;
No tender thoughts of home his heart divide ;
Domestic joys and cares he puts away ;
For realms are households which the great must
guide.

As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day :

So looks our monarch on this early fight,
Th' essay and rudiments of great success :
Which all-maturing Time must bring to light,
While he like Heaven does each day's labour bless.

Heaven ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd :
God and kings work, when they their work survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find.

In burthen'd vessels first, with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do season'd timber send :
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And as the surgeons of maim'd ships attend.

With cord and canvass, from rich Hamburg sent,
His navy's molted wings he imp's once more :
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,
And English oak, sprung leaks and planks, restore.

All hands employ'd the royal work grows warm :
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

With glewy wax some new foundations lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung :
Some arm'd within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

So here some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift:
Their left hand does the caulking iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand,
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops:
Which, well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the gall'd ropes with dawby marline bind
Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpawling coats:
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

Our careful monarch stands in person by,
His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore:
The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
And ships which all last winter were abroad;
And such as fitted since the fight had been,
Or new from stocks, were fall'n into the road.

The goodly London in her gallant trim,
The Phenix, daughter of the vanish'd old,
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire:
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow
laves :

Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

This martial present, piously design'd,
The loyal city give their best-lov'd king :
And with a bounty ample as the wind,
Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring.

By viewing Nature, Nature's handmaid, Art,
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow:
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,
Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
An useless drift, which, rudely cut within,
And hollow'd first, a floating trough became,
And cross some rivulet passage did begin.

In shipping such as this, the Irish kern,
And untaught Indian on the stream did glide :
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appear'd,
When from lost empire he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tyber steer'd,
Where coin and commerce first he did invent.

Rude as their ships was navigation then ;
No useful compass or meridian known ;
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no north but when the Pole-star shone.

Of all who since have us'd the open sea,
Than the bold English none more fame have won :
Beyond the year, and out of Heaven's high way,
They make discoveries where they see no Sun.

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
And hence be to admiring nations taught.

The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow,
We, as Art's elements, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are ally'd ;
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be supply'd.

Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky :
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

This I foretell from your auspicious care,
Who great in search of God and Nature grow ;
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.

O truly royal ! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind :
And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of human kind.

But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from th' injurious Dutch redeem the seas :
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastis'd with ease.

Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now by first appearing seem'd to claim.

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay :
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

Nor staid the English long ; but well supply'd,
Appear as numerous as th' insulting foe :
The combat now by courage must be try'd,
And the success the braver nation show.

There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad ;
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the midland sea the French had aw'd.

Old expert Allen, loyal all along,
Fam'd for his action on the Smyrna fleet :
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

Holmes, the Achates of the general's fight ;
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold :
As once old Cato in the Roman sight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

With him went Sprag, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought :
Harman, who did the twice-fir'd Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

Young Hollis on a Muse by Mars begot,
Born, Cæsar like, to write and act great deeds :
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn :
And though to me unknown, they sure fought well,
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

Of every size an hundred fighting sail :
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

Now, anchors weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That Heaven and Earth and the wide Ocean
rings :

A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings.

The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast :
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host.

So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie :
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly,

Then if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth, and runs along her loom :
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drags the little wretch in triumph home.

The Belgians hop'd that, with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run :
Or if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

But with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heav'd them from below;
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,
And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command,
Beneath them to submit th' officious flood ;
And with his trident shov'd them off the sand.

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight :
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night.

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hastening up behind,
Who view far off the storm of falling sleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.

At length the adverse admirals appear :
The two bold champions of each country's right :
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight.

The distance judg'd for shot of every size,
The linstocs touch, the ponderous ball expires :
The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires !

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before :
But now they by their own vain boasts were ty'd,
And forc'd at least in show to prize it more.

But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouze conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,
Which did two generals' fates, and Cæsar's bear :
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.

Their batter'd admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight :
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,
Who call'd that providence which we call'd flight.

Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly :
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if, to praise them, all the States stood by.

O famous leader of the Belgian fleet,
Thy monument inscrib'd such praise shall wear,
As Varro timely flying once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair.

Behold that navy, which a while before
Provok'd the tardy English close to fight ;
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie dar'd to shun the hobby's flight.

Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know :
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe.

Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory, which we disdain ;
Then let them know the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint of injur'd Spain.

Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's manes did an offering bring :
England, which first, by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her king.

Our fathers bent their baneful industry,
To check a monarchy that slowly grew ;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.

In Fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless Destiny ;
Whose dark resorts since Prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be.

But whate'er English to the blessed shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet ;
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.

Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants, and their land besets ;
Each day new wealth without their care provides ;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.

So close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans t' attend their prey ;
And give no chace, but swallow in the fry, [way.
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the

Nor was this all : in ports and roads remote,
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send ;
Triumphant flames upon the water float,
And out-bound ships at home their voyage end.

Those various squadrons variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one, to burn them in the road.

Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear :
Some for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest Holland bear.

Some English wool vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France or colder Denmark doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest,
And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

But ah ! how insincere are all our joys ! [no stay :
Which, sent from Heaven, like lightning make
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or grief sent post o'ertakes them on the way.

Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

Each element his dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown ;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down.

Yet, London, empress of the northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire ;
Great as the world's, which, at the death of Time,
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by Fire.

As when some dire usurper Heaven provides,
To scourge his country with a lawless sway ;
His birth, perhaps, some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of Fortune's way :

Till, fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on :
His prince, surpris'd at first, no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

Such was the rise of this prodigious Fire,
Which in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,
And luxury more late, asleep were laid :
All was the Night's ; and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of Nature did invade.

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of Fire their fatal birth disclose ;
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed ;
Till th' infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head.

Now like some rich or mighty murderer,
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold ;
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
And dares the world to tax him with the old :

So scapes th' insulting Fire his narrow jail,
And makes small outlets into open air :
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
And beat him downward to his first repair.

The winds, like crafty courtezans, withheld
His flames from burning, but to blow them more :
And every fresh attempt he is repell'd
With faint denials weaker than before.

And now no longer letted of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enrag'd desire :
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire.

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice :
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

Our guardian angel saw them where they sate
Above the palace of our slumbering king :
He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to Fate,
And drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing.

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the sight ;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

The next to danger, hot pursued by Fate,
Half-cloth'd, half-naked, hastily retire :
And frighted mothers strike their breasts too late,
For helpless infants left amidst the fire.

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near ;
Now murmuring noises rise in every street :
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men jostle as they meet.

So weary bees in little cells repose ;
But if night-robbers lift the well-stor'd hive,
An humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive.

Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day :
Some run for buckets to the hallow'd quire :
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play ;
And some more bold mount ladders to the fire.

In vain : for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent ;
The flames impell'd soon left their foes behind,
And forward with a wanton fury went.

A key of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze :
The waken'd tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

Old father Thames rais'd up his reverend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return :
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

The Fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross ;
To either hand his wings he opens wide ;
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,
And plays his longing flames on th' other side.

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take ;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed ;
At length grown strong, their mother Fire forsake,
And a new colony of Flames succeed.

To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide ;
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies unoppos'd for prey divide.

One mighty squadron with a side-wind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does haste,
By powerful charms of gold and silver led,
The Lombard bankers and the 'Change to waste.

Another backward to the Tower would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind :
But the main body of the marching foe
Against th' imperial palace is design'd.

Now day appears, and with the day the king,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest :
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place ;
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks, that drive against his sacred face.

More than his guards his sorrows made him known,
And pious tears which down his cheeks did shower :
The wretched in his grief forgot their own ;
So much the pity of a king has power.

He wept the flames of what he lov'd so well,
And what so well had merited his love :
For never prince in grace did more excel,
Or royal city more in duty strove.

Nor with an idle care did he behold :
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress ;
He cheers the fearful, and commends the bold,
And makes despairers hope for good success.

Himself directs what first is to be done,
And orders all the succours which they bring :
The helpful and the good about him run,
And form an army worthy such a king.

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,
That where it seizes all relief is vain :
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country, which would else the foe maintain.

The powder blows up all before the Fire :
Th' amazed Flames stand gather'd on a heap ;
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap.

Thus fighting Fires awhile themselves consume,
But straight, like Turks, forc'd on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.

Part stay for passage, till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet :
Part creeping under ground their journey blind,
And climbing from below their fellows meet.

Thus to some desert plain, or old wood side,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round;
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.

No help avails : for, hydra-like, the Fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way :
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire,
Before he rushes in to share the prey.

The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud :
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more :
So void of pity is th' ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store.

As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh,
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempests which the others fly :

So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade ;
Ev'n from their jaws they hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.

The days were all in this lost labour spent ;
And when the weary king gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light.

Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the general doom ;
Where souls distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready with their bodies come.

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends :
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

Those who have none, sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wonted room require :
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murder'd men walk where they did expire.

Some stir up coals and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run ;
And while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

The most in fields like herded beasts lie down, .
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor ;
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near,
An infant waking to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

No thought can ease them but their sovereign's care,
Whose praise th' afflicted as their comfort sing :
Ev'n those, whom want might drive to just despair,
Think life a blessing under such a king.

Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Outweeps an hermit, and outprays a saint :
All the long night he studies their relief,
How they may be supply'd and he may want.

" O God," said he, " thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress !
Who me unfriended brought'st, by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess :

" Be thou my judge, with what unweary'd care
I since have labour'd for my people's good ;
To bind the bruises of a civil war,
And stop the issues of their wasting blood.

" Thou who hast taught me to forgive the ill,
And recompense as friends the good misled ;
If mercy be a precept of thy will,
Return that mercy on thy servant's head.

- “ Or if my heedless youth has stepp’d astray,
Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand ;
On me alone thy just displeasure lay,
But take thy judgments from this mourning land.
- “ We all have sinn’d, and thou hast laid us low,
As humble earth from whence at first we came :
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.
- “ O let it be enough what thou hast done ; [street,
When spotted Deaths ran arm’d through every
With poison’d darts which not the good could shun,
The speedy could outfly, or valiant meet.
- “ The living few, and frequent funerals then,
Proclaim’d thy wrath on this forsaken place :
And now those few who are return’d again,
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.
- “ O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree,
Or bind thy sentence unconditional :
But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,
And in that foresight this thy doom recall.
- “ Thy threatenings, Lord, as thine thou may’st re-
voke:
But if immutable and fix’d they stand,
Continue still thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.”
- Th’ Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword ;
And bade him swiftly drive th’ approaching Fire
From where our naval magazines were stor’d.

The blessed minister his wings display'd,
And like a shooting star he cleft the night :
He charg'd the flames, and those that disobey'd
He lash'd to duty with his sword of light.

The fugitive Flames, chastis'd, went forth to prey
On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd ;
By which to Heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

The wanting orphans saw, with watery eyes,
Their founders' charity in dust laid low ;
And sent to God their ever-answer'd cries,
For he protects the poor, who made them so.

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise :
Though made immortal by a poet's song ;
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire :
But, since it was profan'd by civil war,
Heav'n thought it fit to have it purg'd by fire.

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
And widely opening did on both sides prey :
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only ruin must enlarge our way.

And now four days the Sun had seen our woes :
Four nights the Moon beheld th' incessant fire :
It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
And further from the feverish North retire.

In th' empyrean Heaven, the bless'd abode,
The thrones and the dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God ;
And an hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky.

At length th' Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast :
He saw the town's one-half in rubbish lie,
And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above :
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.

The vanquish'd Fires withdraw from every place,
Or full with feeding sink into a sleep :
Each household genius shows again his face,
And from the hearths the little Lares creep.

Our king this more than natural change beholds ;
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound :
To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with cold rain ;
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth
And straight the green fields laugh with promis'd
grain :

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before :
The standing streets with so much joy they view,
That with less grief the perish'd they deplore.

The father of the people open'd wide
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed :
Thus God's anointed God's own place supply'd,
And fill'd the empty with his daily bread.

This royal bounty brought its own reward,
And in their minds so deep did print the sense ;
That if their ruins sadly they regard,
'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

But so may he live long, that town to sway,
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
And not their humble ruins now forsake.

They have not lost their loyalty by fire ;
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe.

Not with more constancy the Jews, of old
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

The utmost malice of the stars is past, [town,
And two dire comets, which have scourg'd the
In their own plague and fire have breath'd the last,
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown.

Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
And high raised Jove from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid work succeed.

Methinks already from this chymic flame,
I see a city of more precious mold :
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver pav'd, and all divine with gold.

Already labouring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
Which Heaven will to the death of Time allow.

More great than human now, and more august,
Now deify'd she from her fires does rise :
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And opening into larger parts she flies.

Before she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side ;
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.

Now like a maiden queen she will behold,
From her high turrets, hourly suitors come ;
The East with incense, and the West with gold,
Will stand like suppliants to receive her doom.

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train ;
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again.

The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
The glory of their towns no more shall boast,
And Seyne, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stain'd, and traffic lost.

The venturous merchant, who design'd more far,
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
Shall here unlade him and depart no more.

Our powerful navy shall no longer meet,
The wealth of France or Holland to invade ;
The beauty of this town without a fleet,
From all the world shall vindicate her trade.

And while this fam'd emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those, who now disdain our trade to share,
Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast.

Already we have conquer'd half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind :
Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
And not so great to vanquish as to find.

Thus to the eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more ;
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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